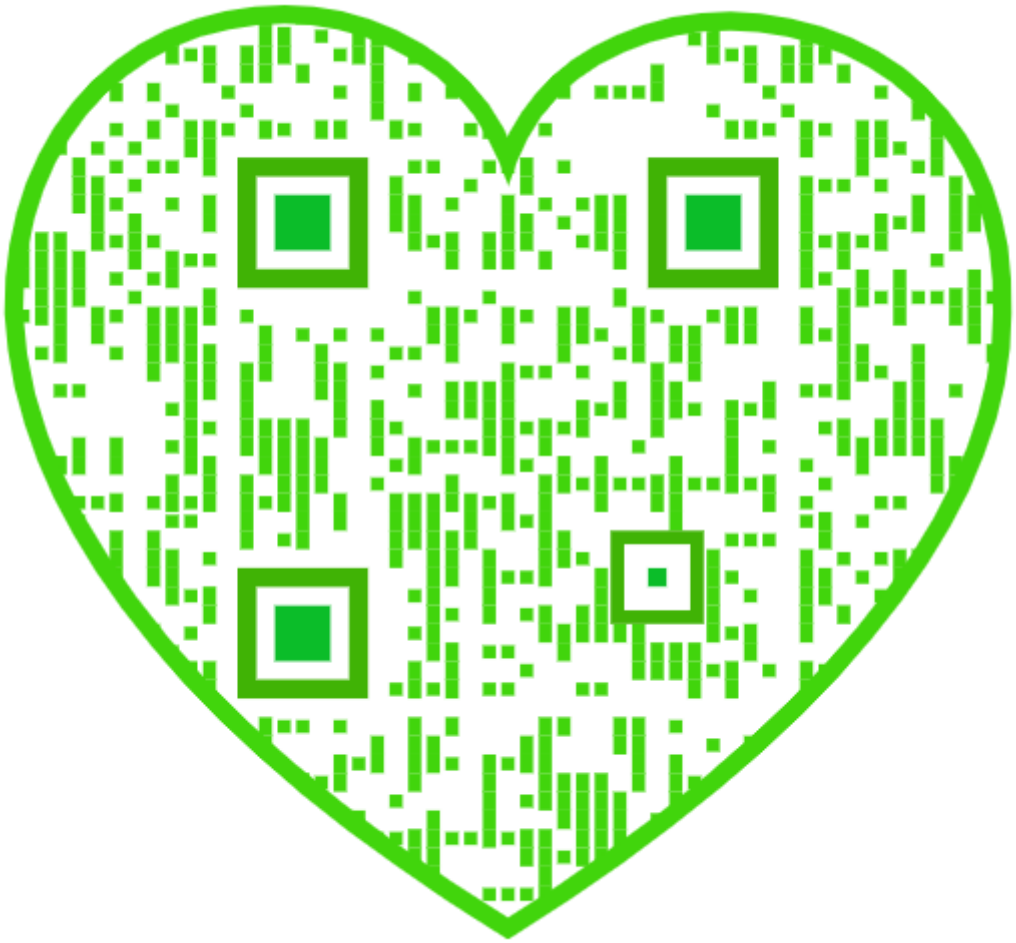
Steps Into Journalism

SHUMAN



STEPS INTO JOURNALISM:

HELPS AND HINTS FOR YOUNG WRITERS.

BY

EDWIN LLEWELLYN SHUMAN.

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PREFACE.

CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER once remarked that he had found plenty of people who were not able to subscribe for a newspaper, but never had he seen the person who was not perfectly able—in his own estimation—to edit one. It can therefore do no harm to print secrets which lavish heaven has already implanted in every living soul.

It is not the aim of this book to make any more writers: we have too many now. On none of these pages will there be found a single word tempting any young man to leave the farm or the business office, or advising any young woman to forsake the household routine, in order to run after the ignis fatuus of literary fame. Where there are words of encouragement or enthusiasm they are for those only who have the divine call—which,

in preacher and editor alike, is nothing but the native ability to do that one thing better than any other thing in the world.

This book is the outgrowth of a course of instruction in journalism conducted by the author in the Chautauquan assembly at Bay View, Michigan, where the demand for something of the kind was seen to be widespread and earnest. These pages, though in part addressed to beginners, are for those who would be writers in any case, by the force of predilection, whether the world vouchsafed them applause or a flout. In part they are meant for country editors and city reporters who have not had time or opportunity to study the best journals of the country or to analyze modern journalistic methods. And in part they are written for the thousands of young men and women who are trying heroically at home to write for newspapers and magazines and who cannot understand why their manuscripts are rejected with such painful regularity. If a man is bound to be a writer he may as well have every possible chance to be a good writer, if so cheap a thing as advice can avail anything to that end.

The instruction in these pages is merely a condensation of the experience common to all editors who work up, as did the author on certain Chicago papers, from the onerous responsibilities of printer's devil to those, successively, of compositor, proof-reader, reporter, copy reader, telegraph editor, exchange reader and editorial writer. But most editors, after having come through this ordeal, are either too busy to analyze and systematize the knowledge that has been pounded into them by grim experience, or too weary to give any advice save in emphatic and sweeping negatives. Hence things that to them are commonplace, to the outside world are secrets—near of kin to the newspaper man's conventional "open secret," which an unkind critic has defined as being something that no one knows. Through this professional reticence the author takes the liberty of breaking. And, though these pages were written entirely in moments stolen from sleep or recreation, the writer has tried to keep as far from unjust pessimism as from the still more vicious extreme of sentimental optimism.

Charles Dudley Warner's bit of sarcasm, as usual with an epigram or a pearl, has a solid grain at the heart. Most newspaper readers do not realize that journalism has grown to be a profession requiring every whit as hard study and preparation as medicine or the law—that it is no easier to become a great editor than to attain distinction as a famous professor. Looked at in the light of this fact, the little that can be learned from the reading of a single book on the subject seems infinitesimal. And so it is, in a sense; yet for those who will patiently embody in actual practice the principles and suggestions here set down, the first and most important lessons will already have been learned.

E. L. S.

EVANSTON, ILL., January 1, 1894.

Steps Into Journalism.

VIEW OF THE FIELD.

In returning from a trip to Alaska a few years ago I had the good fortune to be on the same steamer with an old prospector who had seen much more of the interior of that wonderful country than I had. He had just come down the whole length of the Yukon river, and I naturally looked upon him with no little awe and admiration.

As we paced the decks of the steamer St. Paul, pitching and rolling in the stormy North Pacific between Unalaska and San Francisco, I often tried to draw him out and get him to describe the wonders he had seen. My success was something like this:

"You went down the whole course of the Yukon, from the headwaters clear to Bering Sea?"

"Yes."

"How did the river impress you?"

"Oh, it's a gigantical river."

"And that vast wilderness of rocks and tundra—what do you think of it?"

"Now, lemme tell you the honest fact: that's a gigantical country."

"Um—yes; but tell me about some of the resources of that region."

"Well, young feller, I'll tell you; they're gigantical—simply gigantical."

When I went down the gang plank at the San Francisco dock I knew exactly as much about the Yukon valley as when I first met my gigantical friend under the frowning Aleutian cliffs fifteen days before.

Today the young men and women that are just reaching out for the pen are asking eagerly about the highways and byways of the great undiscovered country of journalism. I have been traveling in that region of the literary world for the last dozen years, and have come to the conclusion that it is a "gigantical" country. But, though the whole matter is doubtless summed up in that one mysterious word, I will try, for the sake of these eager inquirers, to go a little more into details than did my Yukon friend.

The journalism of today is both an art and a science. In so far as it is a science it can be taught by instruction and advice; in so far as it is an art the beginner can acquire skill in it only by actual practice. The student who

is so fortunate as to be able to secure a combination of instruction and practice is the one who, other things being equal, will make the most rapid progress.

Advice never yet made a writer, and never will. Experience is the only university that can confer the degree of Master of the Pen. Advice to a young writer can never take the place of work on his part, but it may save him a great deal of useless work. Is it not passing strange, by the way, that there is no institution, no instructor, to whom the would-be fiction writer can go to learn his art? In music we have conservatories and music teachers; and the young artist who wishes to create a picture or a statue can go to a studio and learn under a master. But when a man wants to create a piece of art in literature—say, a great novel—he has no teacher to whom he can go for that special knowledge not included in the ordinary literary courses of our colleges. He must stumble along alone and learn only by repeated trial and failure. It is almost as bad in newspaper work. There is no good reason why there should not be professional schools for editors and reporters as well as for physicians or typewriters.

True, a few colleges have already recognized the profession of journalism in their curricula, but as yet in only a half-hearted

way. The time is coming when all our chief colleges will have chairs endowed for the instruction not only of young men and women who are looking toward journalism, but of literary aspirants of all kinds, to teach constructive work—how to shape and color and breathe life into a great story or treatise.

In the meantime, the beginner will have to learn in the good old way—by hard experience. All that a writer on the subject can do is to designate the direction in which the most profitable brand of experience is to be found. The hand on a signboard may point out the right fork of the road and save the traveler from getting lost in the forest, though it can never pick him up and carry him to his journey's end. The highest aspiration of the present treatise is to be such a matter-of-fact signpost for the benefit of those rash folks who have their heads set on exploring the wilderness of newspaperdom.

Said a self-important young man to a crusty old gentleman one day, "I have made up my mind to become a journalist, sir; what kind of paper would you advise me to work with ?"

"With a piece of sandpaper," growled the old man, without looking up from his cash book.

Perhaps the old gentleman was right; and perhaps he was not. At any rate, if the

young fellow had two grains of sand in him he went off and became a brilliant reporter, out of pure pique. Discouragement is not the kind of advice that is needed; or, if it is needed, it is not the kind that will be taken. The plain, unbiased truth about newspaper work is what I should want as a beginner, and that is what the readers of this book shall have. If that is not sufficient to frighten you away into some field of endeavor where the work is less and the pay greater, then yours is one of those hopeless cases which nothing but experience can cure, and perhaps not even that.

Many people who think they are cut out to be writers are mistaken; but nothing will demonstrate that fact to themselves or to anyone else except the stern mathematics of experience. The young woman who remarked that she could write well enough, if somebody would only give her a subject, probably spoiled a first-class dish-washer when she tried to be literary. Anybody who lacks for subjects in a world like this was never intended for a writer. Wrongs to right, great lives and deeds to chronicle, new triumphs of science to describe, the seething battlefield of human life to paint—how vast and how alluring is the work that stretches on and on before the enthusiastic writer! The

one grim question that dogs his footsteps night and day is, What *not* to write about.

Newspaper reporting is probably the best apprenticeship that will ever be found for teaching readiness with the pen. But it is as well to realize at the outset that the career of the reporter is neither a flowery bed of ease nor a glory-lighted pathway to fame. The young man or woman who longs for either ease or widespread reputation will leave hope behind at the threshold of the reporters' room,

> "For it's wurrk and groind all day,
> Without any sugar in yer tay."

The salaries of newspaper workers average less than those received by men who put the same amount of talent and energy into business pursuits. The hours are longer than those of the school teacher, and the work is equally wearing without bringing any holidays or long vacations. And as for personal reputation, not one American newspaper writer in a thousand ever comes to be known by name to his readers. The reporter must sink his personality out of sight and merge his very identity in that of his paper. So long as he is a reporter it is an unpardonable sin for him to express in his "copy" his own ideas on debatable questions. Every newspaper has a policy, determined by the editor-in-chief, and it is the reporter's duty to hew

to the line that has been stretched for him. Nobody cares what his private opinions may be upon matters political or things critical. His business is to report facts and other people's opinions.

This work of local chronicler is excellent training for certain other kinds of writing—not for all kinds, as we shall see later—and the work has its charm for any eager mind. Moreover, it would do no harm, but on the contrary would do much good, if all would-be writers, without exception, understood the plan on which a newspaper story is built. A "story," by the way, in newspaper parlance, is not simply a bit of romance, but anything written in narrative form, from the account of a royal wedding to a description of the state of the hog market.

Before the young aspirant apprentices himself to the press it behooves him to know what manner of taskmaster this is, that he must serve. It is not always kind; neither is it always unqualifiedly good; but of its greatness there can be no question. Newspapers are even crowding out the books, and, to a degree, the magazines. There are many wealthy men with great libraries in their houses who read scarcely anything but the daily journals from one year's end to another.

True, another saying of the times might be aptly quoted here, to the effect that peo-

ple no longer read; they only look. Nevertheless, the newspaper has become the king of the realm of letters. A rather harum-scarum and ill-spoken limb of royalty it must be confessed he is, in some of his aspects. But it always pays to be on speaking terms with the king, especially if you are going to make your bread and butter in his realm. And, after all, the ruler is no worse than his subjects; the newspaper is just what its readers make it. Editors must fill their columns with something that will fill the publisher's coffers, and the public, by their patronage, determine what this shall be.

Journalism, with all its frothy gossip and all its demoralizing details of crime, is also commanding the best literature of the world. Cabinet officers, senators, scientists, scholars, in every civilized nation of the globe, are contributors to American newspapers—especially to the Sunday paper. There is scarcely a man wielding the pen today whose services the newspaper cannot command.

As for the influence of the press, its power as a molder of public opinion may, I think, be overestimated and is overestimated by many people. The time has come when the American people, at least, are doing a vast deal of thinking for themselves. The editorial columns of the daily papers no longer have the power that they used to wield. The

day of servile party organs is past. But as an educator the press can never be overrated. It is a greater educator than the forum, the church or even the public school. The average child goes to school only three years of its life. Not one quarter, even of the educated people of America, attend church, but since the advent of penny papers nine-tenths of those who can read take their newspapers. The vast majority have no other means of education. It is almost appalling, when we stop to think of it, that the voters, the men who are the sovereigns of our land and who make and unmake our presidents and our legislators, get their schooling almost wholly through the newspapers.

EVOLUTION OF THE PRESS.

It needs but a glimpse of the details to give one a realizing sense of the proportions and nature of this mighty genie which Gutenberg conjured up 450 years ago and which has been growing and spreading out its myriad arms ever since, until now it fills the whole earth.

The newspaper was not such a great institution fifty years ago. In the early part of this century it could not compare with the pulpit for power. The rostrum in those days was the Colossus of Rhodes and the press was a little trading galley that passed and repassed beneath it. Today the press is a Great Eastern that can take the said Colossus as a steerage passenger and give all the rest of the world a first-class cabin berth beside.

There are now 21,000 newspapers and magazines in this country where eighty years ago there were only 200. The aggregate circulation of the newspapers in the United States is estimated to be nearly 2,000,000,000 annually, or about forty copies for each man, woman and child. Fifty years ago all the

New York dailies put together did not issue more than 10,000 copies a day; now there are at least half a dozen that have each a daily issue of over 100,000, and several with more than double that circulation.

This marvelous growth of the newspaper industry is a thing of comparatively recent years. It was the war of the rebellion that made the American newspaper great. The breathless interest to know whether the blue or the gray was victorious and whether any dear, familiar names were on the list of killed or wounded in the last battle made a reading nation of us.

Even now there are some old men left who can tell you how they used to print their papers on a Washington hand press, one page at a time; how the flat type-form was laboriously inked each time by hand; how the dampened sheet of paper was carefully laid upon the type, and then how, with a back-breaking pull on the lever, they took the impression; and how, finally, with the perspiration trickling down their editorial brows, they pulled out the printed sheet—cautiously, so as not to tear it—rolled their shirt sleeves a little higher, and went to work on the next copy.

Those were the days when the circulation of a paper depended upon the number of pulls that one pair of arms could give to a lever during the hour or two that span the life of a

news item; 500 was a large circulation, 1,000 enormous, and beyond 1 500 an impossibility. If some prophet had told those muscular editors that before the end of the century there would be a New York paper issuing 400,000 copies daily, he would either have been thrashed or locked up as a dangerous lunatic.

The newspaper has been completely revolutionized at least four times in the last half century. The agencies that did it were, first, the cylinder press; next, the railroads and telegraph; then, the multiple press; and, finally, the stereotyping process and its companion, the wonderful perfecting press now in use. And even now we are about to witness still another revolution at the hands of that innovator so much dreaded by the printers—the type-setting machine.

The first revolution was caused, very appropriately, by the revolving cylinder press. This is the press still in use, in a greatly improved form, for the printing of books. In this the type stands in a flat bed which is carried back and forth beneath a great, heavy cylinder; the paper is fed in at the top, passes between the cylinder and the type, and comes out printed on one side. Beside such a press, especially with steam power hitched to it, the hand press was nowhere.

But the influence of the daily journal still could not be very sweeping so long as the

mails were carried on horseback. Then came the railroads; they tripled, quadrupled, multiplied a thousand fold the area of circulation.

Again the craft was utterly revolutionized by the invention of the fast printing press. It is not too much to say that one man—Richard M. Hoe—gave a new birth to journalism. When he showed how types could be put upon a revolving cylinder he did as much for literature as the inventor of gunpowder did for war. With the Hoe press of 1846 came the possibility of addressing millions, at the moment of their keenest interest, within a single hour, upon the events of that hour. And almost simultaneously with the railroads had come Morse with his telegraph a few years before, so that now the news might be flashed from every State in the Union and retold ten thousand times by this "lightning press." It was an era in the history of the world.

And at this stage came another change as startling as any in its way. The publication of newspapers ceased to be the work of journeyman printers, propagandists, needy politicians, self-sacrificing reformers, starving adventurers. From this point on, ideas were to be spread not so much for the sake of the ideas as for the sake of the money that was in them. Henceforth the newspaper was to be a great business enterprise, demanding large capital, the most skillful management,

and—because it paid—the best work of the brainiest writers.

Under this enormous stimulus and development the newspaper again outgrew its facilities; no printing press ever devised could print enough papers to supply the millions of eager readers who called for them.

Then came the latest change, amounting in extent to a revolution: the stereotyping process, by which, in a few minutes, the types for the whole paper are duplicated again and again, so that the same edition may be set running on a dozen or two dozen presses at the same moment. Hand in hand with this discovery has come the perfecting press—a marvelous piece of mechanism that devours the blank paper in a continuous ribbon, prints both sides, folds, cuts, and pastes the whole sixteen-page paper automatically, and counts out the completed copies at the incredible speed of 30,000 an hour.

To feed such an insatiable monster the typesetting machine is bound to come. In fact, it is already here. Many of the large dailies are using machines by which one man can do the work of eight or ten—intricate mechanisms representing the life work of more than one indefatigable inventor and performing acts so marvelously like those of the human hand that they seem to be living, breathing things. In a few years the type

case and the hand compositor will be things of the past, like the lever press and the stage coach.

The present enormous extension of the telegraph lines and ocean cables, which we have come to look upon as a matter of course, has taken place within the lifetime of those of us who may still be called young. Even during the crowning excitement that preceded the civil war the New York *Tribune* was accustomed to receive but two columns of telegraphic news each day. News from Europe came by steamer. News from other cities came by letter when it came at all. Clippings from exchanges were the chief source of the editor's supply--a source to which he never thinks of looking now for news.

Today your foreign news comes exclusively by cable; your domestic news comes altogether by telegraph; a news letter—why, bless your heart, the younger generation hardly knows what you mean by a news letter; it has vanished almost utterly, for the simple reason that the news has been told before a letter could start. Even the account of a battle fought in Siam yesterday is read this morning at the Chicago breakfast table. The newspaper writer at one leap has taken the whole world for his province. Instead of the scant two columns of telegraphic news in 1859 we now have page after page put into

type every day, and fully as much finds its way into the waste basket as ever goes to the compositor's case. Every telegraph editor remorselessly throws upon the floor columns of matter that has been sent by telegraph and paid for, but that cannot be used for want of space. The watchword of the newsroom has come to be condensation — boil down! boil down! The editor is no longer open to the venerable charge of killing a man in the next State to fill a column and then contradicting the murderous report to fill another. What not to print is the great problem of the newspaper editor's life.

Naturally, all this has resulted in changes no less radical in the methods of news-gathering. The long-winded verbatim reporting of David Copperfield's time would be as much out of place in this decade as would the rickety old stage coaches that rattled up to the door of the White Horse Inn where Sam Weller flourished.

But before taking up that part of the subject let us get an idea of how a newspaper office is organized and what it is for. At the head of the whole establishment stands the proprietor; this may be one person or a large number of persons combined in a stock company and represented by a business manager or publisher. In either case the result is substantially the same; the power is concentrated

in one man, and almost necessarily a wealthy man. It is money that makes the press go in this utilitarian age. It used to be ideas. In the old heroic days the publisher of a newspaper was a man who had a message that burned within him and forced him, as in the case of William Lloyd Garrison or Elijah P. Lovejoy, to set up a press that he might give his message to the world. Now all this is changed. A newspaper is a cold-blooded business enterprise. Its primary object is to make dividends for the capitalists who have invested in it. Even the dissemination of news is a mere secondary consideration, or would be if the dividends did not depend upon it; and as for the uplifting of the public morals or ideals, that scarcely cuts any figure at all in the purpose of the publisher; but that, again, is only because moralizing will not make money.

You see, we editors are not given to wasting much love on the publishers. There is an ancient feud between the two, which is simply another phase of the ubiquitous labor-and-capital problem. Joe Howard, a New York writer who was one of the speakers at the World's Fair Press Congress in Chicago, voiced the general feeling of editors on the subject when he said:

"The publishers of today are a lot of literary sweaters who look upon all editors and reporters as especially made for them to

squeeze. They say, 'There is Howard; I'll take him, squeeze out the juice of his best years and then throw him away and get another.' Fortunately," he added, with a twinkle in his eye, "fortunately, in this case they can't get another."

The fact is, the publisher is no better and no worse than any other business man—and neither is the editor. The newspaper office is not a Sunday-school room, any more than a bank or a wholesale leather store is. A good man or a good woman can do much good incidentally in either place, yet we dare not forget that we are there not to preach but to make money. The enthusiastic reformer who is longing for a place on the staff to promulgate his ideas and reconstruct the world according to improved plans and specifications had better long no longer. If he wants to do that let him set up a press of his own and pay his own printing bills. It would save many a beginner in newspaper work, and especially the good and enthusiastic woman reformers of various sorts, a great deal of useless writing and bitter disappointment if they understood these inevitable limitations at the start.

Under the publisher's control are two chief forces of men, often designated as the counting room and the editorial room. Besides these there are the compositors, the pressmen, the stereotypers, the mailing room force, and

other subsidiary departments, all servants of one or both of the chief divisions before mentioned.

The counting room has its business manager, the editorial room its editor-in-chief and its managing editor, the composing room its foreman and compositors and proof-readers, the stereotyping and press rooms their respective craftsmen, and the etching department its artists and engravers.

Now, notice how the editorial room is organized. At the head stands the editor-in-chief, who shapes the editorial policy of the paper, writes some of the leading editorials and directs the work of the editorial writers.

Next in authority is the managing editor, to whom the editor-in-chief delegates everything that he does not care to do himself, such as the pacifying of irate visitors and the devising of ways and means for filling all the other pages of the paper except the editorial page. Under his control we find the city editor, all the country or foreign correspondents, and the editors of departments, such as finance, markets, real estate, railroads, theaters, sports, book reviews and the woman's department.

On the larger papers the work of the managing editor is divided, giving him an assistant, the managing news editor, whose duty it is to look after the out-of-town cor-

respondents and order the news from them and from all other available sources.

Again, on all morning papers, we have another very important functionary—the night editor. He is the lieutenant in absolute charge of the paper during the late hours of the night, after the managing and news and city editors have gone home. He not only superintends the make-up, reads the proofs and alters anything that does not meet the approval of his editorial judgment, but he is on the look-out to see that every important item of late news, both local and telegraphic, is covered. He combines in his person the prerogatives and responsibilities of all the rest of the staff during the time when he is in power, which is usually from midnight until the paper has gone to press in the morning. The night editor, therefore, holds a very responsible position, and receives a salary only next below that of the managing editor.

Now, take another step in the subdivision and note the city editor and his staff. The city editor, though in a sense subordinate, is usually given almost complete control of his department, and is in many respects one of the most important persons in a newspaper office. He is the czar of the local room, and the reporters are his minions, subject to his orders at every hour of the day; they may

not even go out to lunch without his knowledge and consent. The city editor has for his domain all the news within a hundred miles of the city, and is almost absolute autocrat of what shall go into the local columns and in what shape it shall go. His assistants —those who read over and edit the copy written by the reporters—are called copy-readers

And now we have reached the bottom of the list—unless we include the copy boy. In other words, we have reached the reporter, the beginner, the bright young man who offers his services to the city editor in the firm belief that he knows it all, and who learns the first day that the things he doesn't know would fill a Sunday newspaper. He is the individual who actually does the hardest hustling for the least pay, and whose tenure of office is so precarious that he is supposed never to pass the waste-basket without looking in to see if his head is there. The reporter, either masculine or feminine, is an interesting character, and especially so to those who have a covetous eye on his shoes. We will examine the creature and its ways with more microscopical attention farther along, when we can take a whole chapter to do the subject justice.

PLAN OF AN ARTICLE.

Paradoxical though it may appear, one of the first and most important rules in newspaper writing is this: Do not begin at the beginning. Like most rules, however, this may do more harm than good without some qualification and explanation. Let me make the idea a little clearer, and then, when the reasons are given on which the law is based, and the penalty which awaits the writer who transgresses it, both reason and penalty will be found to be entirely sufficient.

The style followed almost universally in large American newspaper offices at present is to put the most important and startling point first. Not only this, but the marrow of the whole story, whether the latter be two inches or two columns in length, should be told in the first paragraph, and the briefer the paragraph the better. This is the rule, though in its application it is subject to a hundred variations to avoid stereotyped forms. For instance, the rule may often be varied with good effect by starting off with a short, bright bit of dialogue, followed immediately

by a condensed statement of the whole matter to be covered by the article.

It is hard to formulate any steady rules and regulations for so unsteady and unruly a thing as the American newspaper, whose main object in life is apparently that of being different today from what it was yesterday. But here we have at least one rule to which the beginner can scarcely tie too securely. Put your best, strongest, most startling statement first. Get the pith and point of your whole article into the first sentence, or at least into the first paragraph, so that the rest of the story might be "killed" and the news would still be "covered." Shun long-winded introductions as you would a palsy. Give the point first and leave the introduction and explanation to come afterward. This is the first and greatest commandment, and the penalty for breaking it is the waste-basket and swift oblivion.

If you should lay down the book without getting another idea, and yet learn thoroughly this one simple journalistic trick, I should be almost content, for, in the language of the sainted Barnum, "this alone is worth the price of admission."

Do not make the fatal error of thinking that a newspaper story must be told in chronological order, beginning in the once-upon-a time-there-was-a-little-boy style, and leading

up, in the dear old granny crescendo, to the thrilling climax in which the wayward youngster is devoured by the retributive bear. The proper newspaper order is unusually the exact reverse of that. So, if a modern little boy ever did do such a naughty thing as to run away from his mamma, and if a bear ever did do such an un-bearlike act as to eat anybody, the proper way to begin the story for newspaper purposes would be something like this: "Johnny Dodge was devoured whole this morning, copper-toed boots and all, by an enormous grizzly bear. He had run away from home," and so on, ending with the solemn moral about the total depravity of small boys in general, if you must have a moral. A sermonizing turn given to a newspaper article, however, you will soon discover, accomplishes nothing more than to elicit sundry naughty words from the copy-reader as he reaches for his destroying blue pencil.

To take a more modern and probable instance: If some poor woman has been abused by her husband, thrown out on the street, and, struggling for weeks against poverty and disgrace, finally succumbs to her load of sorrow and ends the tragedy of her life by suicide, it is this last, most startling fact that should make the first sentence. Don't begin back at the first drink that was the beginning of the whole tragedy and work up to the cli-

max as you would and should in an oration or sermon; but put your climax first, follow it with a résumé of the whole sad story in the next half-dozen lines, then begin a new paragraph and tell the whole narrative from the beginning, taking care, wherever possible, to put the best and freshest matter to the front, and to crowd the parts of the story already known into the background toward the end of the article.

Two potent reasons have caused this style to be adopted almost involuntarily, and perhaps in some cases unconsciously, by the metropolitan daily papers. One is the tremendous volume of news demanding a place in the press; the other is the wish to catch the eye of the reader, fix his attention, and give him a chance to get the pith of the story in a nutshell if he has not the time or the desire to go into details.

The more nearly any newspaper, no matter how large or how small or whether published in New York or in Sitka, can follow this style in the construction of its news stories and of its headlines, the better it will be liked by busy men and the greater chance it will have to weather the financial storms amid which the modern galley is so prone to founder. It is the ideal plan of construction for a newspaper article, from a business man's standpoint, and can never be improved

upon for the purposes of men who have only twenty or thirty minutes a day to give to newspapers, and yet who must keep posted on the run of the world's events.

The ignorance of American country editors regarding the proper construction of a news story is remarkable, considering their general intelligence and success in other lines. A knowledge of this one professional secret would often give an editor an advantage that would enable him in the end to distance half a dozen equally able competitors that were ignorant of it and that kept on throwing their news together in the cumbrous old style and writing heads over their colums that told substantially nothing of the narrative to be found thereunder.

This matter of headlines, by the way, is a study in itself, and is understood in few of the smaller offices. The object of a headline over a news story is to tell the whole tale—so far as this can be crowded into the specified number of letters that compose the line. The main head—usually made a full line—should therefore contain a verb, expressed or implied, as well as the leading noun in the story, the whole aim being to crowd just as much of the story into the line as possible. Here it is easy to see why the best papers try to avoid the use of "the" at the beginning of headlines. This colorless word simply crowds out some other with more meaning in it.

The first sub-head should usually be explanatory of the main headline, amplifying the original statement. The other sub-heads—for most papers use "big heads" or "slug heads" over news articles exceeding one-half or two thirds of a column in length—should recapitulate the more important details contained in the body of the article, so that the whole head, when read through, will sum up the story in a nutshell.

Thus the hurried reader gets a general idea of the news of the day by simply reading the headlines of his paper. If he has more time, he may read the opening paragraph of the more important articles, thus getting the stories a little more fully; while, if he is specially interested in any particular subject, he can in a moment pick out an article relating to it and read the whole.

Never, then, begin a head with "the," "a" or "an," and try to avoid beginning sub-heads with those colorless words. Cram as much meaning into the headlines as possible. Furthermore, try to avoid beginning your story with "the;" young writers are prone to begin all their paragraphs with that commonplace word.

Getting the news is, of course, the first requisite for success in newspaper publishing; it is better to get the story into the type-forms upside down than to spend too much

time trying to write it correctly, and thus to let some other paper get ahead of you or to be too late to get the article into that day's edition at all. But, with this exception, there is no more important point for the editor than that he get his material into such shape that the reader can find the most news of importance in the briefest space of time. Especially is this of vital importance in a hustling young Western city or in any community where men and women are kept in hourly remembrance of the fact that time is money and that money is their only salvation from the wolf that is never very far from their doors. It will pay every country editor to realize this fact. The time is coming when no publisher can succeed without correctly constructed news columns. That time has already come in all our largest American cities, where the competition is fierce and the time of readers limited by the never-ending rush of business duties.

The myriad interests demanding representation in the modern newspaper, and the consequent imperative necessity of "boiling down" everything, sometimes at a few minutes' notice, have also aided in producing this typical Yankee newspaper style. They have made it imperative that all matter shall be put into a shape allowing of quick condensation, even after it is in type. This dessert-

first, soup-last style meets the requirements of the case. When some unexpected and important event occurs and claims several extra columns of the editor's space, he can make room by simply "killing" the last paragraphs of the other stories, instead of having to rewrite them all in a more condensed form or throw something out bodily.

Here is where young out-of-town correspondents often make their fatal error. Something of importance happens in their community, and they telegraph a long account of it to their papers, beginning with the dull minutiæ of a general introduction and leading up to the grand climax, in which the nugget of the news is hidden at the end. The telegraph editor gets it, most likely at a late hour; he is under orders to cut everything down to the marrow, because the local department has a big sensation with which it is going to fill more than its usual space. The hard-worked slave at the telegraph desk glances over the correspondent's dispatch and notes with a groan that the only way in which he can make it come into the reduced space is to write the whole story over again.

"Rush your stuff; only ten minutes left till press time," the managing editor adjures him in passing the door.

It may be important matter, but on the floor it goes, from date line to grand climax, with

a muttered but forcible remark by the sub-editor that is far from being complimentary to the unconscious correspondent. The paper comes out, but the reporter looks in vain for a line of the story that he wrote so carefully; and his friends look in vain for it, too. and blame him for not having attended to his business. In the next mail he gets a letter from the managing editor inclosing, not the check that might have been, but a curt notification that his services as correspondent will no longer be required. Failure—utter failure—and all for lack of knowledge of this little trick in the arrangement of his materials.

Perhaps a reference to my personal experience would be pardonable at this point. When I began writing for the newspapers I could have been saved many a bitter disappointment and many a column of almost useless work if some kind mortal had told me two comparatively simple things: the importance of putting the gist of the whole story into the first paragraph, and the equal importance of getting "copy" into the office early. A realizing knowledge of these two points would be worth many dollars to every beginner. We have already seen the fate of an ill-constructed story when it comes in late. If it had been rightly built and yet had come in late, the only difference would have been that the first paragraph or two would have been used instead of the

whole going into the waste-basket. As this sort of correspondence is usually paid for by the amount appearing in print, it is not hard to see that this matter of promptness is almost as important as the other.

Here, then, we have at least two commandments of the literary decalogue: Get your news to the editor as quickly as your lucky stars will let you, and, Carry the news to your readers with the cream always on top. Be sure, too, to get these three things into your first paragraph: the actors, the place and the time at which the event occurred. You cannot be far astray if you have these, woven in so as to tell the vital point of the news, in the opening sentences of the story.

And now, before going to other divisions of the subject, let us attend carefully, once for all, to a horde of minor points which, individually, seem trifling, but which, taken collectively, are of the greatest importance, especially to the beginner. They should be learned so thoroughly at the start that the right method will ever afterward be as second nature to the writer.

Whatever you do, don't write on both sides of the paper—not even if you have to use a new sheet for the last half dozen words of an article. Copy written on both sides of the paper proclaims its author to be a novice of the tenderest emerald hue, and its fate is sealed from

the beginning. There is nothing of fanciful ultra-refinement about this requirement; it is based on the most solid and sensible of reasons. In all large daily paper offices each page of the copy is cut into short pieces or "takes," and the takes are numbered consecutively and given to as many different compositors. Imagine the mixture a foreman would have on his hands if he were to undertake to cut up copy written on both sides. The continuation of one man's take would be on the back of another printer's copy. In order to use such an article it would be necessary to rewrite half of it on new paper, and the articles are few and far to seek for which an editor will go to all that trouble.

The best size of paper to use is about 6x10 inches, as this is most convenient for all concerned. Plain print paper of about that size and of sufficient firmness to allow the use of either ink or pencil is usually furnished in newspaper offices, and this is always acceptable. It may be bought cheaply at any paper house or printing office. The size mentioned is best because if the sheets are much larger they cover up too much of the printer's case, and if they are smaller they are not so convenient for the copy reader.

Copy written in pencil is perfectly acceptable, provided the manuscript is clear and the pencil soft and black. An editor abominates

hard pencils and pale ink. Refrain from stirring his thoughts to mutiny by dim writing, and you will be kind to yourself. The majority of reporters use a soft pencil for their work, though not a few use pen and ink. For my part, I prefer the pen to the pencil and the typewriter to either. The machine is rapidly coming into general use in newspaper offices and the time has already come when the reporter who can manipulate the typewriter has a decided advantage in securing a position. It has also come to be true that the outside contributor is almost compelled to have his article typewritten if he wants it to have the fullest chance of acceptance. So, if you are contributing an article to a strange editor it will pay to have it typewritten if you can; but if that is not practicable it will answer almost as well to have it clearly written in ink.

In manuscript it is often better to print foreign words or unusual names in schoolboy style; in fact, most offices have a standing rule that reporters must thus print out all proper names. But be sure you do not thus display your ignorance in primary school arts by turning your "s" rear end to, or dotting your capital I's, or mixing caps and lower case letters indiscriminately.

The main point, after all, is to have the article written as legibly as possible. Blind, careless writing is not only an injustice to your-

self, making your copy less likely to be accepted and less likely, if accepted, to be printed correctly; but it is also an imposition upon the editor, who has to puzzle over it, and still more upon the compositor, who is paid by the number of types he sets, and for whom every moment lost is wages lost. A prevalent idea is that a printer can decipher anything short of a cuneiform inscription; it is true that an old printer can make sense out of scrawls that an ordinary business man would not pretend to read; but it is also true that it takes much time and usually considerable profanity to do it, and after it is done the author is not unlikely to consider the translation painfully free.

And don't be stingy of paper. Leave margins of about an inch at the tops of pages and of a half or three-quarters of an inch at the left-hand side and bottom. The top margin is necessary because the pages are pasted together, one sheet after another, before the copy is cut for the printer. The other margins are needed to give the copy-reader room for making corrections, and a liberal space should be left between sentences and lines for the same purpose. Leave at least one-fourth of an inch between the lines. Try, too, to get about the same number of words on all the pages, so that the editor can estimate from the folio numbers how many words there are in the article and how much space it will fill in the paper.

Be sure to "folio" or number your pages. The folio figure is usually placed in the middle of the page at the top, with a small arc of a circle under it to prevent its being mistaken for a part of the article. Draw a small dash under the end of your article to show that it is complete.

Let the sheets remain flat, if possible, as folding, especially crosswise, makes the sheets inconvenient to handle. Above all, do not roll your copy, for that makes it unmanageable, so that it will not lie on the compositor's case. If you are sending it by mail and do not find it convenient to enclose the flat sheets between pieces of pasteboard, the next best way is to fold the copy lengthwise; you can always get a long envelope at the post-office to contain it in that shape. Never pin the pages together; that will stamp you as a novice almost as surely as writing on both sides of the paper or beginning your article with a letter to the editor instead of putting the letter on a separate sheet.

Speaking of writing to editors: Make it short. As the absent-minded editor wrote in his missive after propounding a delicate and important question to his best girl: "Write legibly and on only one side of the paper, stating nothing but what is strictly to the point."

Abbreviations are rather to be avoided

entirely in printers' copy until you become familiar with the ways of an office and learn how far they are allowable; then you will be able to save considerable time by their use in certain cases. When you write an abbreviation and wish to indicate to the compositor that he is to spell the word out in full, lightly draw a small arc of a circle under it, or, as is the custom in some offices, inclose the word partly or wholly in a circle. As a period in manuscript is hard to distinguish from a comma, it has become the almost universal custom to inclose the period in a small circle or to discard the dot entirely and use in its stead a small cross. The proper use of the colon, semicolon, comma, exclamation, question and quotation marks are best learned by the study of any good book or magazine, and their use must be mastered by everyone who expects to succeed as a writer.

The proper formation of the paragraph can also be learned by observation in reading, but few people take the trouble to master it until they get it drilled into them in a newspaper office. Be sure to indent the first line of each paragraph; begin the first line at least an inch farther to the right than the beginning of the rest of the lines. Nothing will more quickly give a slovenly look to a manuscript than ending a sentence about the middle of the page and then starting the next out flush

with the left-hand edge, as if you had not started to make a paragraph at all. The compositor especially detests this kind of irregularity in copy, for he cannot tell whether to make a paragraph in the type or not, and if he guesses wrongly he will have a very annoying correction to make when the proof comes back to him.

This is a matter of so much importance that most newspaper men write a paragraph mark either at the beginning or end of every paragraph, or in both places, if there is the least chance of a misunderstanding. This mark is very necessary, for instance, when the end of a paragraph happens to come at the end of the sheet, with a full line. The printer getting this page alone could not tell that there was not more to follow, without this mark to indicate the fact.

You will have little trouble in knowing how to paragraph your matter if you remember that every paragraph is a little article in itself, written on some subdivision of the topic in hand. Each paragraph could have a headline over it and stand alone. For instance, the one which you are now reading might be entitled, "How to Paragraph Matter." These subdivisions of an article, it is true, may be re-subdivided indefinitely, so that different writers may paragraph the same article differently; but you cannot go

far wrong if you make a paragraph each time you make a new point in the argument and never let a paragraph be longer than about 200 words. In writing dialogue, commence a new paragraph every time there is a change of speakers.

If you have forgotten somewhere in the article to make a paragraph where there should be one, all that is necessary to have it set in type correctly is to write a paragraph mark at the point in question. If you have made a paragraph where there should be none, make a "run-in" mark—a curving line connecting the end of one sentence with the beginning of the next. Use the same mark when you have canceled several sentences or words, thus bridging over the break that has been made. When at the top or bottom of the page the matter has been written in the shape of a paragraph and there should be none, run a line out from the beginning or end of the sentence, as the case may be, to the edge of the paper; this means, "Make even," and the printer will make no paragraph there.

If you have canceled a word or sentence and afterward rue the cancellation, put a line of dots under the words that you wish to restore and write on the margin of the page the word "Stet." This means "Let it stand," and every printer is a classical scholar to the extent of understanding it.

Divide words only at the ends of syllables. Avoid the division of a word at the end of a page; also the writing of "John" at the bottom of one page and "Smith" at the top of the next. And, more important still, avoid running the last few words of a paragraph over to the top of the new page. A broken line of this kind at the top of a printed column is unpardonable and brands the work as that of a blacksmith; and this, to some degree, is the case with a broken line at the top of a manuscript or typewritten page; not only does it look untidy, but it is likely to give a great deal of trouble to the compositor in a way that any printer will explain if you ask him.

One line under a letter or word shows that the word is to be set in italic type; two lines, that it is to be set in small caps, and three lines, caps or full capital letters. The drawing of lines under all emphasized words is a relic of barbarism and will count against you if you do it in a manuscript sent to an editor nowadays. That underscore in each case means italics, and it is seldom indeed that italics are used now to indicate emphasis. People who know enough to read at all usually have an idea that they can interpret plain English without being furnished with a diagram of it.

This underscoring, which is the pet failing of the feminine writer, is also entirely un-

necessary in private letters. But the young man who presses the letters to his bosom may take issue with me on that point. At any rate, for literary work, use italics very sparingly; almost the only case in which they are necessary is that of foreign words, and, perhaps, to indicate the names of newspapers and magazines.

The habit of continually quoting words to emphasize them is a similar mark of rusticity. Don't quote words or phrases unless you mean to indicate that they are those of some one else; and in such cases etiquette usually demands, too, that the reader should know who that some one else is. And in this connection let me warn the young writer to adjure hackneyed expressions and trite quotations of all kinds.

Quoting strange words or ordinary words used in an extraordinary sense is often necessary, but the reader must know from what lingo the writer is quoting, and this use of the marks must be indulged in sparingly. In short, temperance—temperance in all things, and especially in italics and quotation marks—is the golden text of this particular lesson.

It is the almost universal custom among newspapers to inclose in quotation marks titles of books, songs, or dramas; also titles of articles when referred to in the text.

But every well-regulated office has rules of its own governing the use of quotation

marks, italics and small caps, telling what words should be capitalized and what should not, and all the rest of these minor points, which vary more or less in different offices. This is called the newspaper's "style," and one of the many revelations that come to the new recruit in journalism is the fearful and wonderful diversity of these "styles." In one office the editors will have rules for capitalizing about half the nouns in the language; in another just across the street they will capitalize nothing but the name of their own paper and perhaps that of the deity.

These mooted points of capitalization, however, do not need to trouble you until you get on the staff of some paper. In the meantime, it is far more important to acquire a clear, strong style of writing. Avoid parentheses and parenthetical expressions of all kinds; two short sentences are ten times better than one long sentence with a parenthesis in the middle. Learn to be direct. Go straight to the point. Use the shortest words that you can find to express your meaning, and then when you say something it will make a mark on the mind.

DAY WITH A REPORTER.

In nine cases out of ten the beginner gets his first training as a reporter. Reporting is the gateway to journalism, and the man who has once made a triumphal entry through it has the newspaper world at his feet. Or, to be more prosaically accurate, he will have a first-rate chance to become a sub-editor, if a "desk job" is to his taste, and thence to work up to the higher and more lucrative positions.

If it did not involve such an alarming stretch of the imagination, the city editor might be called the angel with the flaming sword who stands at the entrance to the journalistic Eden of young men's dreams. At any rate, he is a very important character for us just at this point, and it behooves us to make a friend of him at once. As we have seen, the city editor is the absolute despot of the local room and its editorial staff.

But if the city editor has power he also has responsibility to match. One of the requirements of his position is that he shall never "get scooped"—in other words, no important item of news within a hundred miles of his desk is to escape him. How does he

get wind of everything that happens? Through all manner of sources, but mainly by sending reporters to investigate "tips" which give promise of news.

These "tips" are gotten by closely watching all the latest issues of rival papers, noting announcements of future events, taking up topics that have not been exhausted or promise new developments, and keeping an "assignment book" with the day and hour at which each subject will be ripe for investigation by a reporter. Much of the court and police news, and the like, is gathered by a systematic round made every day by a man detailed for that work, and these reporters while on the outside are always on the watch for important "tips" and notify the city editor by telephone when they happen to stumble upon anything not in their line. Many of the "tips" also come from friends of the paper, or from people who are interested in having a certain event reported.

The result is that in these days of swift communication it is rarely that a wide-awake city editor fails to get any important item of news. But when he is so unfortunate as to miss an item of moment he is sure to hear something from the editor-in-chief that no man likes to hear.

We are likely to think that Damocles, with a sharp sword suspended over his head by a

single hair, had a rather uncomfortable time of it at his royal meal. But Damocles was a bobolink in nesting time compared with the city editor of a great daily, who forever sits with two such swords dangling over him, ready to carve off his editorial head without a moment's warning. One of these is the deadly "scoop," and the other is the no less sanguinary libel suit. To let some other paper get ahead of him in the publication of an important piece of news, or, on the other hand, to print something that will give cause for a damage suit against the proprietor—either of these two things is liable at any moment to cost him his position. It is as if Ulysses had been compelled to steer all his life between Scylla and Charybdis; sooner or later one or the other is pretty sure to wreck him or swallow him up.

At his desk he sits all day, with the telephone in front of him, messenger boys beside him and reporters close at hand, ready to be feet and fingers for the ideas in his head. And upon the shoulders of his reporters he has an uncomfortable way of dropping his own weight of responsibility. This brings us to the subject of our present investigation.

The reporter is the bright young man of impecunious purse who does the hardest and most disagreeable work and gets the least pay for it; who gets the most hard kicks and

the least hard cash and lives perennially in the midst of hard times, associates with a hard crowd, and finally succeeds in making of himself a pretty hard case. The reporter is expected to be brilliant on the spur of the moment, to be witty for a consideration, to be profound in a hurry and superficial to order; he must keep on the good side of the saloon politicians and at the same time win the confidence of the W. C. T. U.; he must have a religious vocabulary for the preacher, drawing-room manners for the ladies, slang of assorted grades for the vulgus; he must surely be all things to all men, else how can he report a sermon in the morning and a cock-fight in the afternoon without getting the terms mixed?

Young man, before you realize that fond dream of yours and become a reporter—before you go to work amid the blinding rush and smoke of a great city and the smudge begins to soil your shirt front and your soul, let me preach you a little sermon. I promise that it shall be orthodox in form and a model for brevity. I will take my text from the book of a thousand mens' bitter experience, and my theme shall be what might be called the three graces of the newspaper man—industry, honesty and reliability; and the greatest of these is reliability.

First, however brilliant a man or woman may be, without industry, patience, persever-

ance and persistency there is little hope of advancement. The city editor has no use for the reporter who pleads off from a midnight assignment because he is tired. While such a man is resting the other fellow is gathering the plums.

Secondly, dishonesty and deception may make a glittering success of it for a time, but the mask will be torn off sooner or later, and in a newspapar office it is usually sooner. Editors are good judges of character, and the reporter who thinks it is smarter to write a "fake" than to shag around and get the facts is a fool; and, verily, the fool and his job are soon parted. No matter whether that reporter's superior be of the same stripe or not; he is undermining his superior's confidence, for even a knave knows that the man who will lie in his behalf will also lie to his detriment if the occasion presents itself.

Thirdly and lastly, reliability combines all the graces. It is better to be a plodder and reliable than a genius that cannot be depended upon. The reliable man will be preferred every time in the newspaper office. He will be given the most important assignments, will have the confidence of his employers, and will be welcomed instead of rebuffed when he calls a second time upon a man for news. Reliability also includes personal habits; the traditional groggy bohemian

has no place in the modern newspaper office. A man must be habitually sober instead of habitually drunk. Even the periodical inebriate must go; he is always missing at the critical moment and is an insupportable bore. There is a homely text in my bible, and it ought to be in yours: A man can't drink whisky and stay in business. And if a man has grit enough to leave the drink alone he will not be likely to be troubled by the depths that lie still lower.

Oh, the bright young manhood, the precious enthusiasm, the mental strength and moral fiber that shrivels and sloughs away into loathsomeness at touch of the foul breath of the hell that lies under every great city and over which every reporter must tread day and night! It is enough to wring a sermon even from a city editor.

And now, dispensing with the doxology and the amen, let us return to our muttons. There is a cloud of dread by day and terror by night that forever hangs over a reporter; it is the fear of "falling down on an assignment." An item of news that he is sent to report is an "assignment," and "falling down on" it is failing for any reason to get it or "cover" it, as they say in a newspaper office. The reporter is in some respects in the position of the soldier—he must carry out his chief's orders or die in the attempt. No won-

der that under the pressure of such a system he should acquire a reputation for impudence —cheek of leather, brow of brass.

One of my first experiences in reporting was on a Chicago morning paper. Late one night the city editor gave me a queer assignment, based on this rather extraordinary notice:

WANTED—To exchange—A brand-new double sleigh for a first-class servant girl.

The advertisement was signed by a prominent man in South Evanston, and it seems that he had tacked up the foolish little note in the post-office there in a fit of joking desperation, for he was short of servants and long on sleighs.

"Take the midnight train for South Evanston and ask him what he means by this mysterious advertisement," were my instructions.

"What! At this hour of the night?" I gasped, appalled at the effrontery of the act.

"Certainly, and be lively about it, too. Rout him out of bed, get the story, and if it is worth anything wire me a column."

I shall never forget how foolish and guilty I felt when I thumped on that innocent man's door about 1 o'clock at night and brought him rushing down stairs in his night clothes to see who had been murdered or where the fire was. I fully expected that he would

assault me with intent to kill as soon as I announced my business, or at least throw me down the front steps as I deserved. Fortunately he saw the funny side of the situation, and after a hearty laugh told me the series of domestic tribulations which, coupled with the utter absence of snow all winter, had suggested the joking "ad," and when I went to the telegraph office I was able with the liberal aid of my imagination to cover both my assignment and myself with glory.

If you once get an idea of the enormous pressure and fear of failure under which every conscientious reporter works, you will be less likely to give way to the overpowering temptation to slay him on the spot when he comes prying into your private affairs. And however much you may despise this pernicious inquisitiveness of the *fin de siecle* newspaper, it is as well not to forget that the very reporter who does this impudent, prying work may despise it as much as you do. While we are fixing the blame, let us place it where it belongs—on the abnormal individualism of the age and country.

Let us now take a peep into the sanctum of the city editor—the local room—the barracks of the reportorial corps, the place where the beginner is likely to have his first introduction into the journalistic world. On a morning paper the reporters are expected to

be on hand for duty at 1 o'clock in the afternoon and to work until any time between 12 and 2 at night, according to the demands of circumstances and the city editor. On an evening paper the usual hours are from 8 in the morning to 4 in the afternoon, with 15 or 20 minutes snatched about noon for lunch.

We will follow a reporter through his duties for one day and see what he does and how he does it. But first it may be well to correct a false idea which most people seem to have—that reporters wander about, haphazard and Micawber-like, waiting for news to turn up. Nothing could be much farther from the fact, for even the general-assignment man scarcely ever goes out without being sent for a particular piece of news, and usually to a designated place or person.

Suppose you are a young man doing general assignments on a Chicago morning paper. It is 1 o'clock in the afternoon—the time when the work is getting under full blast for the next day's issue. You have just finished your breakfast and reported for duty. The editor sits within his cage making the afternoon assignments. He calls your name, and you are at his side in a moment.

"I have a telephone message saying that a big steamer has crashed into the Halsted street bridge, cut it clean in two, and probably killed several men. Now fly. Telephone me the minute you have the main facts."

Away you go. At the first corner you jump into a cab, for expense is not counted by a live newspaper when it is after important news. A crowd surrounds the place when you get there; you have no time for ceremony, so you push your way through. A policeman yells at you to stand back, and raises his club threateningly, but you show a reporter's star and are allowed to pass.

One of the bridge tenders has just been rescued, dripping, from the filthy river, and though he is in no mood to talk you pounce upon him with your questions: "How did it happen?" "Whose fault was it?" "How many people were on the bridge at the time?" and so on.

Below lies a half-submerged tug upon which the bridge has fallen. No one seems to know whether any of the crew were killed or not. Down you go to the deck of the tug, dangerous though it may be, and ply the rescuers there with questions. You learn that all on board saved their lives by jumping and swimming, but that the machinery of the tug has been smashed into junk. The big steamer that has done all the mischief seems to have come out of the melee with nothing more serious than a badly battered nose. Then off you go to report to your chief. You may have to run a mile before you can find an available telephone, but keep a stiff upper lip; such annoyances are part of the business.

"Cover it up thoroughly and play it for a column," comes the order over the telephone.

The next thing is to get the necessary data —the dimensions of the steamer, the names of the various men who have figured in the accident, the captain's version of the story to offset that of the bridge-tender—all the time keeping your eyes wide open for little incicents, funny, pathetic or exciting, with which to embellish your article. You will have little use for a note-book, except for a few figures and names.

Then, with a vivid picture of the whole scene in your mind's eye, and making sure that no important feature has escaped attention, you take the street car or cab for the office. During the ride you have your thinking cap on, and are arranging the facts in your head so that when you reach your desk you will have your opening sentences all ready to dash down, and the rest of the story arranged in your mind just as if you were going to give the whole as an extempore speech, point after point, all ready to flow from the nib of your pen as fast as you can scribble.

That is the way it goes with the reporter who knows his business. But woe to the man who comes back with the whole thing a jumble in his head, so that he cannot write it out in a reasonable time. And woe to him, too, if through any ill luck or bad management he

"falls down on" the assignment, and fails to get the matter for which he is sent. His reportorial head will not survive many such falls. Excuses, valid or lame, are of little avail; the city editor has no time to waste in listening to excuses.

We will say it is 5:30 o'clock when you finish your 1500-word bridge story. After a hasty meal at a neighboring restaurant you are off on another assignment. A wealthy man at one of the hotels has been sued for breach of promise and you are detailed to get an interview with him. He answers your rap, peeps out, sees that you are a reporter and tries to slam the door in your face. But, no; sad experience has taught you too many hard lessons to let you be floored so easily as that; your No. 8 is inside the door and prevents it from closing.

"My dear sir, you want to see me a great deal more than I want to see you," you say, politely. Then you quietly explain that your object is to get the truth in order to contradict the wild and compromising rumors that are afloat concerning him—in short, that you want to set him right before the world and hush the voice of calumny.

Fall down on that assignment? Not much! Why, when you leave that man after fifteen minutes' talk he is not only in a good humor but actually grateful, and you have enough

material to make a column if necessary. Perhaps you may be compelled to resort to almost the same tactics with the woman in the case, if the editor decides that the dear public will want still more of the scandal.

You and I have our private opinions about filling column after column with this sort of stuff; but if we are reporters,

> "Ours not to reason why,
> Ours but to do or die."

Besides, people who feel called upon to scold the editors should not forget that newspapers are just what their readers make them. The penny in the pocket of the reader is the ballot that settles the policy of the newspaper, and the majority rules.

By 7 o'clock you have your third assignment—for we will imagine that this is an extra-busy day. Perhaps this time you must investigate a saloon brawl, in which a man has been fatally stabbed. When you ask the saloonkeeper for the facts he says; "Oh, it was nothing. Come, have a cocktail. Tell your readers," he adds, with a wink, "that I keep a quiet, orderly place, and that this little affair occurred on the other side of the street." But as you are not the kind of a man who sells his honor for a drink, and as it might take you half the night to hunt up the real story at the morgue and among the murdered man's friends, we will change the

supposed assignment. You are just as likely to have been sent speeding away out of the city to a suburban town to report a strawberry festival.

Many people have an idea that reporters have a chance to attend all the jolly entertainments, enjoy the programs to the end, have a good time generally, and then go to their offices and write up the same at their leisure. Alas! I wish that were the fact. But let me puncture that glittering bubble right here.

When you are acting as a reporter you are a young man on duty. Upon reaching the gay scene of the strawberry festival you have no time for tête-à-têtes with the girls; no soft speeches and ice cream for you. You hustle around and find the managers, learn the number of people present and the probable amount of the receipts, take in at a glance the salient features of the brilliant scene—the booths and costumes and blushing fruit vendors with cheeks as tempting as the strawberries they are selling—get a synopsis of a speech that is to be made later in the evening—by literally bulldozing the speaker into letting you see his manuscript—and then, before the music and speaking have even begun, you are off on the 9 o'clock train to write up the whole affair in the past-perfect tense at the dingy office, filling in the missing details from your imagination.

When you get through with your half-column on this subject you may have a half-hour of idleness, or you may not have a minute. The fire alarm on the office wall rings, and you find yourself threading dark, disreputable alleys, hunting up the night watchman of the burning building to learn, if possible, where and how the fire originated, interviewing the marshal, routing the owner of the building out of bed to tell him the news and find out the amount of insurance and the value of the ill-fated structure. Perhaps a wall falls and kills a fireman; no matter how dangerously close it came to you; your business is to get the name and residence of the poor fellow beneath, to give a vivid description of how he fell at the post of duty, and to tell of the wife and family now left in sorrow and want.

By the time you have put the last of your manuscript into the hands of the copy-reader it may be 1 o'clock; or, if the fire was a big one, you may not be able to finish before 2, and the night editor may be after you toward the end with a sharp stick, adjuring you in the name of all the gods to hurry up the last sheets.

At last "the jig is up." After the hard, wearing day of eleven or twelve hours of mental toil and strain is over, a large percentage of the staff may make a bee line to

the nearest saloon to have the only recreation open to them at that time of night; but it is needless to say that those who have any serious thoughts of future success are not among the revelers. After a plain but hearty supper, the sensible reporter turns in about 3 o'clock, just when the birds are beginning to twitter among the orchard boughs at home, and sleeps like a rock—if he can for the city's din—until 11 in the morning; then, ham and eggs, and the swift, kaleidoscopic round of duties has begun again.

And so it is the next day, and the next, from one month's end to another, until the very variety of one's duties becomes monotonous; and yet there is a fascination in the life that will not let one give it up. It is hard work, but it is a splendid training for a young writer. It acquaints one with humanity as no other course of training can; and humanity, with its faults, foibles, hatreds, crimes, sorrows, loves and joys, is the great, exhaustless mine of precious ore waiting for the writer to extract its gold. Yet, on the other hand, too much of this hard, matter-of-fact writing and cruel realism of experience is likely to crush all the tenderer sentiments out of one's style, dwarf the romantic imagination, and mar the delicacy of touch needed in order to be a successful novelist.

A great city is to the novelist what a

mountain of gold-bearing quartz would be to the prospector. The miner must know how to get his ore out of the earth, and how to build a stamp mill in which to crush it; he must have great quantities of valuable quicksilver with which to extract the gold from the dross. And so the writer must be equipped with the proper knowledge and experience before he can extract a story or a novel from the vast, seething mass of humanity around him. The best place in the world to get that knowledge and experience is on the local staff of a newspaper office. Only, of course, if a man aspires to be a maker of watches he must not devote too many of his years to forging steel and copper bars, or his hands will grow too horny for the more delicate work of manipulating pinions and hair springs.

The man who wants to be a newspaper writer must read the news continually—especially that in his own paper. He must not only keep track of the telegraphic and local columns and read over his own articles to see where they have been amended, but he must also keep in touch with the people who are his readers. A preacher may stand on a lofty pedestal of idealism and preach over the heads of his congregation and still receive his salary, but the newspaper that tries it will soon be in a receiver's hands.

One cannot work many hours under the direction of a city editor without discovering that one is working under pressure. "Miss Smith, I have another assignment for you as soon as you get that wedding written up;" "Jones, hustle that story; you are taking long enough to write it in verse;" "Brown, for heaven's sake, hurry up with that World's Fair stuff; it's almost time to close the forms;" adjurations like these, only much more lurid, are the whip and spur under which the new reporter finds himself struggling to collect his wandering wits. The result is that he soon learns concentration. He learns the value of time as he never learned it before. Especially on an afternoon paper must the work be done at high-pressure speed, where five minutes may mean the difference between success and failure for the reporter and for his paper as well.

Self-reliance is another thing that the reporter learns in this stern school, for he is usually thrown upon his own resources as to the method of getting the news after which he is sent. He learns to have his wits about him, for he has no minutes to waste in taking false steps; a dozen other bright young fellows are on the alert to get ahead of him, a dozen other papers are eager to get a scoop, and he must be alive at every stage of the game. He learns to see things from the

newspaper point of view, which is the popular view point, and to put his thoughts upon paper rapidly, easily and in logical order. He also learns to separate the wheat from the chaff by a mental winnowing process that he has never known before.

The reporter has a chance to learn the relative value of news from an expert judge. When sent out to investigate a "tip" that gives promise of a story, the first thing that he does on his return is to report the results of his quest in the fewest possible words to the city editor. In a flash the latter will weigh the value of the story, take into account the space still to be filled, and tell the reporter how many words to make of it—whether a stickful (about 160 words), two or three sticks, half a column or a column. Under this training the new man soon learns to judge for himself almost instinctively what an item is worth, and to avoid wasting time in collecting minutiæ on a worthless lead. And the writing for a limited space teaches him the art of condensation and the scarcely less valuable trick of "writing against space," or spinning out a story without making it dull.

Reporting is too likely to be looked upon as merely the lowest round in the ladder of journalism, to be left behind for editorial work as soon as possible. It must be admit-

ted that the present scale of salaries decidedly encourages this view. Yet reporting is rightly coming to be regarded more and more as a profession in itself, and worthy of the best talent that can be devoted to it. The outlook for the reporter is steadily improving. The time was when the largest item on the publisher's expense book was the white paper; latterly it has been the news; some day it will be the brains.

The reporter's work is worthy the best powers even of a Macaulay. Indeed, the reporter should be a local Macaulay, studying to clothe the events which he chronicles in a living garment woven of the myriad trifling scenes and incidents that surround the main event, thus giving it vividness—interest—life. For such reporters there is an ever-increasing demand, though the pay is not yet what it should be and must be to hold the best talent permanently in this department of journalism.

Certain peculiar qualifications are necessary to make a good reporter, just as certain other traits are required to make a good business man or a successful preacher. The work demands quick and accurate thought rather than deep or sustained thought. The man or woman who could write a good critique on Kant's ethics would not be likely to make the best report of a row in a political conven-

tion. Among the most important of reportorial qualifications is that invaluable sixth sense called a "nose for news," which is natural to some people, which may be acquired by others, and which still others can never get by any amount of training. There are those who can never learn to see a news item even if it thumps them over the head. An anecdote or two will illustrate the point.

A young friend of mine on the Chicago *Tribune* was one evening reporting a banquet of the Carpenters' Council, along with a corps of reporters from the other papers. One of the speakers arose amid the wine drinking and laughter and read a long, prosy paper finding fault with the contractors for paying off their employes in saloons. Of course, such a temperance sermon at that moment seemed ill-timed. The banqueters and reporters occupied themselves by yawning audibly and guying the speaker. But my friend had caught the scent of news at the first word and was carefully taking notes while his companions were laughing at him for it and pelting him with paper wads. The next day, the other papers had only a brief routine report of the affair, while the *Tribune* had an article that made a sensation with its revelations of abuses exposed at the banquet of the Carpenters' Council, and that ultimately brought about a practical temperance reform on the point in question.

A talented graduate of an Eastern college some years ago obtained a position on a New York paper through an able special article that he had written. Of course he was put upon general reporting at the start, and one of his first assignments was a balloon ascension. In due time he returned and appeared at the city editor's desk.

"Well, did you get stuff for a good story?"

"No; the thing was a fizzle. The whole affair was spoiled by an accident."

"An accident! What was it?"

"The balloon caught fire and caused a panic that killed about a dozen people, but—"

"Heavens! Did you get their names?"

No; that had never occurred to him. He had gone to write up a balloon ascension.

That brilliant old prevaricator, Herodotus, the Father of History, as he is sometimes called, would have made a first-class reporter, for, whatever his failings, he had the news instinct to a remarkable degree. This, when it once takes possession of one, is almost stronger than death itself. I think, if a modern reporter had been in Pompeii when that city was overwhelmed by the outpourings of Vesuvius, the first thing he would have done would have been to sit down some place where the falling ashes would not burn up his copy and write out a vivid report of a column at least, and dispatch it to his paper before thinking of the secondary matter of escape.

Other important qualities that the successful reporter must have are self-confidence, a wide knowledge of men and of the ways of the world, quickness both of perception and of expression, fertility of resource, and a power to absorb and retain information of every conceivable sort. With him no knowledge will be useless; and sometimes in a pinch he will be fortunate if he has a vivid imagination and the faculty of guessing shrewdly and accurately. He must be a close student of human nature; tact will often be more valuable to him than talent, and personal magnetism than half a dozen ancient languages.

It is rarely indeed that all these qualifications are found in the same person, and when a paper gets hold of a reporter who even approximates this ideal it considers him worth his weight in gold.

You will sometimes find on a newspaper staff men who are illiterate, uncouth, poor talkers and writers, and yet who hold their positions long after more polished members of the staff have been discharged. This is rather discouraging to the university graduate and the man who has spent years in perfecting his literary style. But the secret is told in a few words: He is an excellent "hustler." Somehow, he always succeeds in getting an item of news when he is sent after it, and that, after all, is the great thing in

newspaper work. There are hundreds of people who can write correct English where there is one who can get information out of a stone wall or out of a man who flatly refuses to be interviewed. And a city editor would rather have a report in which every sentence mangles the grammar and makes the dictionary shudder than be scooped.

One of the most prolific newspaper hacks in Chicago once remarked that he did not consider a man worthy of being called a reporter unless he could make good reading out of anything under the sun that he might be asked to write about, from Jupiter's moons to a lamp post or a dead mouse in a puddle. "Why," he added, "I never fell down on an assignment in my life." The very egotism of the man betrays part of the secret of his success. Perhaps it also throws some light incidentally upon the cause of the average newspaper's woeful inaccuracy and multitudinous "fakes."

It is the mission of the reporter to reproduce facts and the opinions of others, not to express his own. One of the articles of instruction given by the Associated Press to its employes is this: "All expressions of opinion on any matter, all comment, all political, religious or social bias, and especially all personal feeling on any subject, must be avoided." This editorializing is the besetting

sin of the country correspondent and a weariness of the flesh to the copy-reader who has to expunge the tyro's colorings and invidious remarks about individuals. Opinions are the peculiar province of the editorial writer. The spirit of modern journalism demands that the news and the editorials be kept distinctly separate. The one deals with facts, the other with theoretical interpretations, and it is as harmful to mix the two in journalism as it is to combine church and state in government. This, at least, is the only safe theory for the beginner.

If you have a simple, sensible, breezy style with a sparkle in it, the newspaper reader will forgive a good deal of inaccuracy in your matter; and if you are invariably reliable in your statements the public will forgive a moderate degree of dullness in your style. But the writer who can combine both reliability and sparkle is the one who will reach the top of the profession. On the other hand, the unpardonable sin in journalism is to be both stupid and inaccurate.

The reporter has to be courageous, sharp as a hawk, mentally untiring, physically enduring. He comes in contact with everybody, from monarchs to beggars, from noblemen to nobodies. He sees the tragedy and comedy of human life, its cynicism and toadyism, its passionate struggling and feverish ambition,

its sham and subterfuge, its lavish wealth and gasping poverty, its joy and sorrow, its good deeds and its most hideous crimes. His is a strange career, with its constant predicaments and anxieties But it is an attractive, fascinating life to many, because of its wondrous change and kaleidoscopic variety.

INTERVIEWS AND NEWS.

The newspaper interview is peculiarly an American product—or was until quite recently. It is a democratic growth arising out of our widespread curiosity concerning the private life and opinions of public men. And in America every person who does or says something remarkable is a public person. The possibility—theoretical, at least—which every man or woman has, of attaining distinction in any particular field, produces a consuming desire to measure our own shoes in the footprints of those who have mounted to where we fain would stand.

As our form of government has led us into regarding a public man as public property, the newspaper reporter goes about supplying this inquisitive demand with a business-like *sang froid* that is liable to jar sometimes upon the delicate self-esteem of the victim, especially if he be one of those lofty individuals who believe that the world was created chiefly for their personal convenience and whose golden rule is, The public be—Vanderbilted. It is indisputably true that the interview, like every other good thing, is often abused and

that the Yankee interviewer is sometimes needlessly impudent. But this does not prevent the interview from being one of the most useful features of modern journalism, and one that has come to stay. It is even creeping into the British journals which so long denounced it as barbarous and tabooed it as a vulgar Americanism. But, for that matter, we never could agree with our British cousins on newspaper matters. They call our papers impudent; we call theirs dull. According to our standards, the English have proved themselves thus far the best novelists and the Americans the best journalists.

So, Herbert Spencer may inveigh against the interview as an invasion of personal liberty, and even William Dean Howells may characterize it as an abominable practice, yet it will always remain a branch of journalism which no student of that profession can afford to neglect. Oliver Wendell Holmes, with his characteristic genial sarcasm, may describe the interviewer as a product of over-civilization, who does for the living what the undertaker does for the dead, and may suggest that he should wear a badge like a war correspondent and produce a certificate from three clergymen of the same belief, but even this last brilliant leaf upon the old literary tree must acknowledge that he buys the paper that prints the most and best interviews with

other great men of the time. The interview is the nearest relative to the novel among the motley crowd of news articles, and the novel, be it remembered, heads the popular reigning dynasty of the age, in literature.

The cut-and-dried interview of a decade ago is now dead, though not yet completely buried. This brand of dessicated goods flourished in its day and generation in the shape of formal question and answer—first a question by the reporter, next a reply by the victim, then another query, and so on, with mathematical regularity, to the end of the story. The reporter was usually given a list of questions to fire off, seriatim, at the victim after the latter had been tracked to his lair. But this wooden and spiritless sort of pabulum no longer suits the tastes of readers and editors. The best writers of interviews now put their matter in much the same shape as that used by the popular novelist. What was formerly a dull broadside of set talk is spiced and enlivened by bits of description portraying the speaker as well as his ideas. Clever condensations of his words are made at points where he becomes too prolix, and droll side-observations are dropped in, while the monotonously recurring questions are often dropped out where the connection is clear without them. The result, when skillfully done, might easily be mistaken for a chapter

from a lively novel, while yet containing no fiction.

The way this result is accomplished is simple, though not easy. The reporter meets his man, has a talk with him on the subjects desired, and, instead of taking a verbatim record of every word he says, watches closely the spirit of what is said, the manner in which it is uttered, the pet phrases and notions of the speaker, and his personal appearance, jotting down his exact words only on vital or technical points. With this material mostly in his head he goes to his desk and writes the interview in the form of a story, alternating dialogue with description and explanatory remarks, so that the result is an article containing the pith and point of what the man said, along with a series of bright, catchy word-pictures giving the reader a good idea of the manner of man that is talking. The difference to the reader is that between a living, laughing man and a talking manikin. And, if conscientiously done by a writer who knows his busines, more than half the words credited to the speaker may never have been uttered by him at all, and yet the report as a whole may be fairer to him and please him better than would a verbatim interview written after the old style.

Interviewing is hard work. Ditch digging is a sinecure in comparison with it, while it

lasts. To begin with, there is that troublesome little ingredient that appears in the famous hare-pie recipe: first catch your man, and after that is accomplished it usually requires consummate tact to get him to talk on the right points, if, indeed, you can get him to talk at all. People to be interviewed are proverbially of three kinds—those who talk too much, those who talk too little, and those who will not talk at all. And after one does get the man to talking it takes the concentration of all one's mental faculties to manipulate the output properly. You must not only pay the closest attention to what he is saying, grasp the points that he makes, take notes on the figures or statistics that he may quote, jot down verbatim some of his striking sentences, and keep up your end of the conversation, but you must also bear in mind all the points on which your article is to touch and be thinking of the next question that you want to ask. You must do all your thinking now, for an afterthought when you get back to the office will avail nothing. And with all your care there will still lurk in the background the grim possibility that if you unwittingly misrepresent the man or "roast" him for his churlishness he may turn out to be a boon companion of the publisher's, in which case you will have to do some still harder interviewing among sundry city editors on the subject of a new situation.

While I was doing outside work I one day met a fellow reporter on a rival paper and we stopped a moment, after the manner of the craft, to swap news.

"There isn't a vacant desk on your paper, is there?" suddenly inquired the young man.

"Why, no; I thought you had a permanent place on the *Post*."

"Left it for higher pay on the *Globe*."

"Then, what's the matter with the *Globe?*"

"Nothing," he replied, as he nervously scraped the gravel of the street with his toe, "only I was assigned yesterday to get an interview with a crusty old duffer on La Salle street and he cut me off so short that I went back to the office and wrote a 'roast' that did him to a crisp. The copy reader was in a hurry and let my stuff slide just as it was, and today I am looking for another job "

"How is that?"

"The old curmudgeon that I roasted was the chief stockholder of the *Globe*."

When preparing to get an interview, before approaching your man be sure you have clearly outlined in your mind just what questions you want to ask him; you can't get anything worth having in this world without knowing exactly what you are after. Then, when your man begins to talk, impress his words carefully upon your mind, or rather his ideas; afterward, when you get to your

desk, whether you took any pencil notes or not, you will find that you can reproduce the conversation almost word for word from memory.

A good memory, by the way, is a prerequisite to success in newspaper work more emphatically than in any other business. The mass of names, dates, stories, locations, wise sayings and historical rubbish of every description that an editor or reporter acquires and must hold in his head is little short of appalling. A good memory carries with it a wonderful advantage. I happen to know a certain rawboned Irishman on a leading Chicago daily who can go to a meeting of the city council, talk with twenty different aldermen, and, without having taken a note, dictate to a stenographer column after column of interviews, using almost the same words as those of the speakers, and never getting a statement credited to the wrong man. Naturally, he gets double the salary of an ordinary reporter.

There are two good ways in which to begin an interview article: either start with a brief paragraph of introduction giving the name of the speaker and locating the conversation in time and place, or begin with the speaker's most important sentence and then go on to state who said it and what was the occasion for the utterance. As you proceed

in the article take care not to be too rigidly verbatim. Wherever there is any part of the talk that is dull or prolix give the pith of the matter in your own words and then drop into direct quotation again. Try to indicate, too, by a descriptive word or phrase dropped in here and there, the appearance, character and manner of the person who is talking.

As to the notebook, use it or not, according to circumstances and the man you have to deal with. But the universal rule among newspaper men is, Keep your notebook and pencil in your pocket just as long as possible. The sight of these dread paraphernalia almost always tends to silence the man or woman who is talking. The thought of going down verbatim in black and white scares the ordinary mortal—unless he happens to have something that he is anxious to have published, and then he will feel hurt if you don't at least pretend to take him down in shorthand. In the majority of cases, however, the effect will be to make the talker much less communicative, even though he understood from the first that you were a reporter; and there is always danger that the sight of the notebook will seal his mouth as tight as a clam at ebb tide.

An important trick in interviewing is to be careful to catch any pet phrase, byword or stereotyped expression that the victim is

in the unconscious habit of using, and to work this into the article once or twice. If you should get everything else crooked and yet make this sound natural, everybody who knows the man, and even the man himself, will feel a lurking suspicion that you must have taken the whole thing down in shorthand, word for word.

The gathering of news items is only another form of interviewing, and is no less of an art. The poorest way in the world to get news out of a man is to go to him and ask "What's the news?" Any general question like this immediately renders the man's mind a blank. It demands the sweep of his thought over the whole ocean of his knowledge, and even if he be willing to make such an effort for your sake he is not likely, in the very nature of the case, to fish up the particular kind of material that you are after. Nine times in ten he will answer in the negative, blandly or otherwise, and turn to his work again.

It is one of the fundamental principles of news gathering that the attention of the interviewed person must first be fixed and his thoughts be started to flowing in the channel that leads in the direction of the information you are after. There are at least two methods of doing this. The usual way is to ask a pointed question bearing as directly as possi-

ble on the matter sought. The other, on which you can fall back if you have not data enough on the subject even to formulate a definite question, is to tell some news of the same kind as that which you are after. The law of association which largely governs the working of every mind will be very likely to suggest to your friend some similar bit of news, and when you get through you will have swapped your stock of news for his, and will probably be richer by several pages in your notebook.

For instance: You are a society reporter, and are in search of the current news about the goings and comings and doings of the people in your community. You call on Mrs. Smith, who usually knows all the society gossip within a mile of her, but who, nevertheless, is not one of the kind who tells all she knows upon the slightest provocation. If you are shrewd you will at the first opportunity steer the conversation in your direction by remarking:

"Had you heard that Mr. Hyde and Miss Jekyll are to be married next week?"

"Yes," she may reply, "and so are Tommy Tompkins and Polly Hopkins."

That is meat for you; and so you can keep the ball rolling and get the dear old lady to tell all she knows, and more, too. But even the most dubious of her gossip may be useful

in furnishing you with a fund of questions with which to ply the next friend you meet.

A regular reporter doing general assignments on a large city daily rarely has to go around hunting for items in the dark this way; he is usually given some definite subject and has categorical questions to ask. But even in metropolitan journalism there are certain of the "department" reporters, as they are called, who have more or less of this sort of work to do. The society editor, for example, must often resort to these methods. The railroad and real estate department men have to visit the large offices in their lines of business and scare up what they can, much as they might flush a grouse if they were gunning for that kind of game instead of the other. Or, to change the figure, every reporter will find it of vital importance, times without number, to be acquainted with this art of fishing successfully without knowing just where to cast one's hook.

Even in assignment reporting, this law on mental association must constantly be kept in view. In short, a reporter must know all the kinks and idiosyncrasies of the human mind as he would know a book. There is no work in the whole field of mundane activity that requires a more exhaustive knowledge of human nature than that of the reporter, and there is no school that can teach it more

quickly or accurately than actual reportorial work.

The amount of this sort of knowledge stored up in an old newspaper man's brain is often a marvel. He knows men as an old violinist knows violins, and can play upon them as skillfully and as easily. He can tell just what cord to touch to bring out the information he is after, and will often get it when his victim thinks he is keeping it the closest. He can tell almost at a glance what manner of man he is dealing with and whether to use soft words, a blunt, plain question, or a bold, threatening bluff. And he can almost invariably tell when a man or woman is trying to deceive him. I would rather take the judgment of two or three honest, experienced reporters on the guilt or innocence of a prisoner with whom they have talked than that of a dozen backwoods juries.

To the reporter knowledge is power even more emphatically than to other people. And knowledge of men is the most valuable of all knowledges to him. In this statement is included acquaintance with people. Scarcely anything is more valuable in newspaper work than a wide circle of acquaintance, especially among the men and women who are the chief actors of the community and are making its history. The reporter who is acquainted will, under ordinary circumstances, be twice

as likely to get the information he is after as the one who goes to his man as a stranger; this is especially true if he is honest and honorable in his methods. It is therefore advisable to choose one city for your work and stick to it if possible. The reporter who knows the most people will, other things being equal, get the highest wages.

Since this is the case, the reporter must learn the names of the people he meets and be able to call the name when he sees the face. There are no two ways about it; it must be done, even if he has to put the names down in a book and study them like Greek. A poor memory for names—after all, what is it but a lack of attention? A little concentration of mind on a name the first time it is heard will help wonderfully in recalling it the next time the face appears. Learning names is an accomplishment that can be acquired the same as any other mental *tour de force*.

In the popular mind the importance of a knowledge of shorthand in newspaper work is greatly overestimated. It is a convenience, not an essential—a luxury, not a necessity. In American journalism shorthand is distinctly of minor importance. The ever-repeated, constantly-increasing, inexorable demand for condensation in the city newspaper has almost annihilated all the value that shorthand ever had for the all-around reporter. A ver-

batim speech is not only too long, but it is also too prosy for the hurrying, hand-to-mouth readers of today. Nine readers out of ten in the cities want entertainment more than accuracy of quotation The salient points of each speech at a meeting must be picked out and woven into a bright, newsy narrative. Shorthand is often a hindrance rather than a help in this kind of work. Many city editors look with distinct disfavor upon a reporter who names among his leading qualifications the fact that he writes shorthand. It is dangerously easy for the shorthander to lose the spirit of a statement by sticking too close to the letter.

If a bit of personal experience is pardonable I may add that I use shorthand constantly in my own work and would not part with my knowledge of it for a great deal. Usually all the notes that I take could be taken in longhand; but stenography is so much swifter that it leaves me more time to listen and catch the drift of the speaker. Thus the science of pothooks if rightly used may obviate the very fault that is laid at its door. Stenography is a friend that can very easily lead the newspaper man into temptation, and yet, withal, is a valuable friend when rightly treated. I cannot entirely agree with the view of a very successful reporter who once made this radical assertion:

"If you could make a swift shorthander of me by simply touching me with the end of your finger I would not let you touch me."

"Why?" I asked.

"Because shorthand cripples the imagination—a faculty as precious to the newspaper writer as to the novelist."

This may be true or not, according to the individual under discussion. Let us give shorthand its due. In London it is almost an indispensable part of the reporter's equipment. And with the amanuensis and court reporter we all know that it is worth more than the knowledge of any foreign language. It has quintupled the letter-writing power of every able business man; but in the newspaper work, while it has its uses, it will hardly pay the all-around reporter for the labor necessary to learn it.

But the typewriter—that is another story. This wonderful and useful machine is fast becoming as indispensable to the writer as the pen itself. Many of our best editorial writers, to say nothing of magazine contributors and novelists, now compose entirely on the typewriter. The Washington *Star* has recently put a machine on the desk of each of its reporters and claims to require every line of its copy to be written on a typewriter. The reporter or editor of the future will undoubtedly have to be a typewritist if he wants to keep up with the procession.

The two chief points of advantage in the use of the typewriter are legibility and time. To the beginner the former is the more important, but in the long run the saving of time far outweighs even that in value. Any newspaper man will tell you that an article from a stranger will stand at least twice as good a chance of acceptance if it is typewritten. Indeed, some magazines refuse to consider an article unless it is in this form. The editor can see at a glance what is in such a manuscript and can grasp its good points at once, if it has any. The contributor at least gets a hearing, and that means a great deal. As articles by the beginner are nearly always submitted "on space"—that is, are paid for according to the amount used and the space filled—the moral is obvious: have your matter typewritten if the means are within your reach; otherwise make your writing as nearly as possible like print in legibility and let it go at that.

There is a saying, "Once a reporter, always a reporter," and there is a grain of truth in the epigram. The constant excitement of the life seems to act on certain temperaments like an intoxicating drink; they get what might be called the reporting habit, and are not happy unless they have their daily dram of excitement. Any other mode of existence becomes unutterably dull in their

eyes; and with it all, unless a man has high aims and considerable self-control, he is liable to acquire vicious methods of recreation and fall into an artificial habit of life and thought. For the mediocre mind the proverb is to a degree true, but for the ambitious young man or woman working for the future as well as for the present it is not true, as hundreds of illustrious examples will attest.

But if it is public distinction that the young aspirant is after, let him not make the fatal mistake of burying his shining personality in a newspaper office. Anonymity is one of the foundation stones of American journalism. One reporter among a thousand, perhaps, becomes by overshadowing ability or favoring circumstances so prominent in his profession that he is able after a while to branch out for himself and write over his own signature, like George Alfred Townsend or Archibald Forbes, or Rudyard Kipling. But the great rank and file of the newspaper fraternity, brilliant as well as mediocre, are known all their lives to their readers as "the *Times* reporter," "the *Herald* editor," etc., and even if they rise to the managing editorship of their papers they are scarcely known by name outside their own office doors. So, a sensible newspaper man, in giving advice to beginners, says:

"Banish from your heads at once all non-

sense about becoming celebrated. Be content with distinction in your own office. Be renowned within its walls for industry, accuracy, speed and good copy. If you must have a wider celebrity than that you would better seek it in some other field."

HOW TO GET A START.

One may study newspaper reporting, proof-reading, editing, and all the other branches of the journalistic profession, from books or under instructors, but, after all, by far the best school is the newspaper office itself. There is no outside instruction that can equal the actual work, with its accompanying responsibility to rub it in, and there never can be. We learn to do by doing. A beginner will learn more in three months of practical work than in a year of school-room study on the subject. No amount of advice or theoretical study can ever teach the art of reporting as can the grim training of the local room of a driving metropolitan daily.

Not that I mean to say a word against schools of journalism or against journalistic courses in colleges, for I believe that such institutions can do much in preparing students to be intelligent learners after their real apprenticeship begins on a newspaper staff. There is no reason why there should not be successful schools of journalism, just as well as theological seminaries and law schools. The old notion, that the journalist is born

and not made, is true, as far as the same sentiment is true when applied to preachers and lawyers, and no farther The time will undoubtedly come when there will be successful schools of journalism in which the methods and practice of preparing copy will be taught; but thus far there is nothing of the sort that is not as yet merely an experiment.

Meanwhile, the troublesome fact that stares the ambitious would-be journalist in the face is that the city editor wants only practiced reporters who know the business and know it thoroughly. He would not have the services of a green hand bestowed gratis. He has no time to waste in teaching a novice, and no desire to employ a man or woman on whom he cannot depend in an emergency. Even the desk men of the editorial staff must not be above rushing out to get an interview if an emergency demands it. A newspaper is like a vessel bound on a long voyage: it cannot afford to carry any but expert sailors; every man, from captain to scullion, must be able to reef the main tops'l in a storm. Thus it comes about that the practiced newspaper writer usually has no trouble in finding a position, and even the dissipated bohemian, no matter how often he falls, can manage to alight on his feet, while, unfortunately, the ambitious beginner, be he never so anxious to work, and work hard, cannot get anywhere

within hailing distance of the charmed circle. It is another hickory-limb case—you have to learn to swim without going near the water.

The great problem for the beginner is to get a start. The only advice we can get when we ask our newspaper friends how to enter their profession is, "Don't." Most of us have no friend at the head of a big newspaper who is willing to put a beginner—though a college graduate—upon his staff as an apprentice and initiate him into the mysteries of the guild. The best lessons must be learned therefore, not in the best school, but in the best available school. And these preliminary lessons, as any old editor can testify, are always hard and often utterly discouraging. But this is the very reason why the beginner should not be discouraged when passing through this trying period.

Under existing conditions the would be wielder of the pen must make a start for himself. You must get hold somewhere, though it be on the humblest country weekly in a backwoods town. You must begin writing and submitting manuscript to the most available papers in neighboring towns or cities, time after time, in spite of failure and disappointment, until you get a foothold somewhere. Then, when you have begun to get your articles into print, study the alterations that the editor has made in your matter;

note the nature of the parts that he has cut out, and the words that he has changed, and avoid in the future the things which his judgment has condemned. Keep everlastingly at it; perseverance is bound to bring some degree of success; whether you ever reach the top depends upon two things, and one of these is persevering industry; the other is natural ability, and neither you nor anybody else can tell whether you have this until you have tried and failed many times It is safe to say, however, that if you are unwilling to labor and wait long enough to carry you through this slough of despond your literary inspiration would hardly be sufficient to carry you over all the rest of the stony way that lies between you and the shining glory shore of the coveted Beulah Land for which you have set out.

If a beginner has once gotten even the humblest start and has the divine call, in the shape of unquestionable ability, he will sooner or later find openings for better things ahead; there is always room in the omnibus of journalism for one more bright young writer.

"But why not try to write for a magazine while I am about it, instead of wasting my time on the ephemeridæ of the daily press?" asks an ambitious beginner.

Because the best mountain climbers have found it advisable to scale the foothills be-

fore trying to reach the summit of the main peak. If you are a young man or woman starting out with a determination to make a livelihood by the use of the pen—a very foolhardy determination, by the way—my advice is, let the magazine alone at first. Newspaper work is surer and far more remunerative for the beginner. It is true that the two styles of writing are quite different, and that the way through journalism does not always lead to the more permanent styles of writing. But newspaper work may legitimately be made the first step in a literary life, if properly managed; it is not so high in its requirements as that necessary on a magazine, but for that very reason it gives a better chance to the inexperienced. And even in this day of magazines the field for that kind of writing is comparatively limited, and is so hedged with limitations and requirements which the beginner can scarcely understand, that the chance is slim for anyone without a reputation to get his foot inside the charmed enclosure. Besides, even the best of magazine writers rarely get a compensation worthy of the careful and painstaking work that they do. Magazine writing advertises their names and helps them if they expect to become authors of books, as most of them do; it is all right as a staff, but very unsafe as a crutch upon which to lean; it is good for making pocket money

on the side, and perhaps a reputation, but as a source of bread and butter the great majority of people have found it painfully precarious.

Time was when this was also true of the newspaper business, as a glance through the annals of London's famous Fleet street, with its starving penny-a-liners, will show. But that time is past; the news of the day is no longer a luxury with the common people, but a necessity, and the journalistic profession has become not only honorable but also fairly remunerative.*

There are a few comparatively large prizes in the shape of $10,000 or $15,000 salaries, but these pertain to the chief editorial chairs of only a dozen among the 21,000 periodicals printed in the United States. Thus, while there is no calling that offers quicker returns in a moderate way to a bright and prolific writer, than journalism, its large salaries are few and far between, and those who are striv-

*The average salaries of reporters in Chicago is $21 or $22 a week; that of local copy-readers, $25 to $30; of sub-editors, $30 to $40; editorial writers get from $40 to $50 a week, and city editors about the same. Managing editors get from $50 to $75 a week in Chicago, and double those amounts in New York. The manager of the Associated Press receives $15,000 a year. John A. Cockerill is said to have drawn the same salary as managing editor of the New York *World;* and George W. Turner is said to have gotten $20,000 a year in the same position. According to a recent newspaper item, William C. Rieck is paid $15,000 as managing editor of the New York *Herald*, and George H. Hepworth gets $12,000 as leading editorial writer on the same paper.

ing after the prizes are legion. This superfluity of aspirants, coupled with the constant temptation to live extravagantly, will account in part for the fact that the generality of newspaper workers find themselves at the end of twenty years, financially, about where they were when they started. There are today in New York 2,000 newspaper slaves who average $25 a week, while there are less than two score who earn over $100 a week. Newspapers are like bookstores: their work is considered so genteel that they are always overrun with applicants who want to try their hands at the work regardless of wages or qualifications. The only valid excuses for a young man's entering journalism are an overpowering desire to write and a natural ability to do that better than he can do anything else. For such there is always room.

Should a newspaper writer have a college education? Not necessarily, especially if he is an indefatigable reader of good books. But it is far more necessary now than in the days when Horace Greeley mocked at the college graduate. The time has gone by for any one to despise a liberal education—and the reporter, of all men, is the one who will find every kind of knowledge of some value. But there is a certain editorial ability, facility, and force, that can be acquired only by practice in a newspaper office. No school or college

can ever teach it. Even the college graduate must spend years afterward in acquiring it. In the acquisition of this power the boy who dispenses with the college and goes directly to reporting gets far ahead. But when a young editor has this practical knack, and yet has under it the broad basis of a general education, in history, political economy, American politics, and classical and polite literature, he has an immense advantage and can soon outstride the rival who has merely the practical experience.

A collegiate education can be easily overestimated, and it usually is by those who lack it But the young writer who has a chance to get it and neglects to do so is extremely foolish. He is deliberately choosing a more contracted horizon where he might have a broader, and tethering himself with a shorter cord when he might have the longer. He may not notice the difference for a time, but in the coming days, when, if he is ambitious, as he ought to be, he will have a weather eye out for an editorial chair to fill, he will wish with all his heart for a wider and deeper fund of knowledge.

The great majority of editors are those men who have graduated from the reporter's desk as well as from college. The best reporter does not always make the best editor, but the same strength of mind and breadth of

knowledge that have made a good reporter will always help to make a good editor, and especially so, if the man who has learned to be a student and to think more than he says.

The trouble with the book student is that when he goes to writing he turns out essays. Now, essays are not among the various and sundry things which the newspaper editor considers "good stuff," and there is likely to be some heart-burning before the contributor gets that fact thoroughly into his cranium. But when the would-be literary person has finally made the discovery that a newspaper will not print even the most brilliant essay on "Artaxerxes," or "The Pharaohs of Egypt," or "The Innateness of Religiosity," the next idea that seizes him is to send the news from his own town to some large city paper. This is a good deal more sensible, for every paper, however poor or stingy, always wants a good piece of news and will pay an outsider for it if it is not already covered. But even this moderate height of journalistic activity is not to be attained at a single bound, and may be as difficult as the other if not gone at in the right way.

Journalism, like charity and missionary work, should if possible begin at home. The best way to get a position as a correspondent for a city paper is first to get a place on the

local daily or weekly in your own town—provided you live in a town. Then, if you are at all successful in this work you will have every chance in the world to get the other. Don't get that foolish notion into your head that you must go to the city to make fame and fortune as a writer, for it is always a sad sight to see a well-meaning young man or woman starve, and that is what is likely to happen if you go to a great city without plenty of friends or money, or the assurance of a position beforehand. I know it is romantic to read of the great writers who have done that sort of thing and who have been snatched from the imminent jaws of death by finally attracting the attention of some great editor with their brilliant articles; but it is really not a bit interesting or romantic to go hungry, and, besides, you never hear of the other fellows who are not saved at the critical moment.

The wisdom of starting in your own home community lies in this: that you can try your powers and tastes without having made too costly a sacrifice in case you and journalism should for any reason decide not to embrace each other after all. Besides, your taskmaster will not be so exacting nor your readers so critical, while the work at the same time leads by a straight road to the more pretentious field of metropolitan journalism.

Almost every large city newspaper has a special correspondent or reporter in all the more important towns for hundreds of miles around. But there is not news enough in most towns of, say, 10,000 inhabitants, to pay more than a few dollars a week, except on special occasions when some great accident or other important event occurs in the neighborhood. The best person for such a position, then, is the editor or reporter on a local paper who must have all the news in any event for his own sheet, and who can send the large daily whatever it may need with but little extra trouble.

There is nothing surprising, therefore, in the fact that the great majority of country correspondents and Associated Press or United Press agents are editors of papers in their own towns. These correspondents often make a very respectable sum of pocket money, even in comparatively small towns, and they are the men and women who have the first chances for positions on the city dailies with whose editors they thus come into constant communication.

To get a start in this correspondence work, it will do no harm, especially if you are already on a local paper, to write to the managing editors of the chief dailies in neighboring cities who, you have reason to believe, have no representatives in your town, asking per-

mission to act in that capacity. But a still better way is to send some important piece of news promptly and in good shape. Of course, it must be something that the editor would not get through any of the regular channels. If you can arrange things so that one paper will have this news exclusively, that will be the best recommendation of all, for there is nothing like a "scoop" for winning the appreciation and good will of an editor.

But you must not expect to telegraph an article to a paper at its expense without first asking the editor whether he wants it or not. Even an old correspondent is not allowed to do that, for the editor may already have a report of that event from some other source, or he may be overcrowded with matter and may not want the story at all.

The way to manage this is to send, at the earliest possible moment, a short telegram called a "query," or "bulletin," giving the pith of the whole story in two or three lines, and asking the editor whether or not he wants the article. This dispatch is always sent "collect," that is, at the expense of the paper; the cost of a dozen words more or less is nothing to a newspaper, and the sending of a "bulletin," even by a stranger, is always allowable. If you "query" a paper and get no reply, the editor's decison is "No," and

there is nothing more for you to do, unless it is to try some other paper. If you get an answer it will tell at what length to write up the story—100, 500, or 1,000 words, as the case may be. Whatever the limit set, you will find favor by coming as close to it as you can without actually counting the words.

But, before undertaking to "query" a city newspaper and send news by telegraph, it will be well for the average beginner, even though he be a successful country editor, to tone down considerably his notions of what constitutes "news." Every editor in chief, of course, has his own notions on the subject, and the ideas of different journals are radically different, but the following extract from the Chicago *Tribune's* instructions to country correspondents is a fair standard:

The classes of news here indicated are not wanted:

Fatal or other accidents to conductors, engineers, brakemen, switchmen, or persons not identified, or persons in obscure positions in life, except when two or more fatalities result from the same accident or there is a great loss of property involved.

Trivial accidents, such as the breaking of legs, losing of fingers by mowing machines, or other like events.

Insignificant robberies, burglaries, tilltappings, etc.

Obituaries of ordinary individuals. But deaths of men of State or National repute should be noticed. In such cases, when there is time, wire the *Tribune* for instructions.

Rapes, abortions or seductions, except when persons of marked prominence are involved, and then be care-

ful to give only facts that are in proof through judicial proceedings. Send nothing on mere rumor. Cases of incest or infanticide are never wanted.

Reports of the celebration or observance of holidays, except when persons of State or National importance are to speak, and in such cases give advance notice by mail and receive instructions.

Daily accounts of testimony in murder trials, unless on instructions.

Specials regarding sporting matters, except after first asking and obtaining instructions.

Abstracts of sermons by telegraph, unless they are ordered.

Accounts of county fairs. But succinct reports of the openings of State fairs may be sent.

Puffs of hotels, or any other advertising.

Theatrical or other amusement notices, except in the case of large cities and artists of National repute, first productions of important plays or operas, or other noteworthy events: and in all such cases instructions should be asked for.

Reports of the proceedings of secret societies, except on special instructions.

Reports of school commencements, or teachers' or other institutes, unless they are ordered.

Crop news, unless specially ordered. In case of rain or frost at critical times, however, wire the *Tribune* and receive instructions.

Weddings, unless previously ordered. Give advance notice thereof, when the parties are prominent, and await instructions.

Ordinary damage suits.

Births of freaks or monstrosities.

Far away crimes (unless persons of prominence are involved), or executions unless ordered.

This is some of the "news" that the best papers do not care to get and will not print

if through the carelessness of a correspondent it happens to be sent. At first blush the beginner may exclaim in dismay that there is nothing left to send; but a little thought will dispel that discouraging illusion.

Now, let us suppose that about the time when you are trying to get a start as a country correspondent there occurs a serious fire in your neighborhood, in which a whole family is burned to death amid very tragic circumstances. Your "query" might be worded like this:

St. Louis *Globe-Democrat:* Family of five persons burned to death. Mother rushed into flames to save children and perished. Do you want story?

Filed 9:15 a. m. JOHN SMITH.

In a few minutes comes an answer: "Send 500 words of fire casualty. Rush."

If you are enterprising you already have your article started by this time, for it is better to run the risk of having to throw away your manuscript in case of refusal than not to be sure of being prompt in case of acceptance. You cannot overestimate the value of time in newspaper work. In this business, even more than in any other, time is money. The earlier you get your article into the editor's hands the more likely you are to have it printed in full. The last hours before going to press are full of rush and hurry for the editor, and he is nearly always over-

crowded with matter; consequently the belated news is usually cut down, condensed, or thrown bodily on the floor. Early news goes into type at once, and after that it stands ten times more chance of being printed and paid for than if it had come in at the eleventh hour.

"But my editor has ordered 500 words," you say; "he won't throw my stuff on the floor."

Don't deceive yourself. If your 500 words come in late only 200 or 300 of them will be likely to go into print, and that is all that you will be able to get pay for; furthermore, if the article is not written so that it can be condensed by merely dropping off the last part, you may look in vain for so much as a stickful of it when the paper comes out—unless the matter was of extraordinary importance.

If a young reporter can once become thoroughly impressed with the overshadowing importance of this one idea, the value of time, he has taken a long step towards success and promotion.

The question of how to begin a telegraphic news story is only less important than that of promptness. The principles are the same as those laid down for the reporter in the local room, but they are so important that they will bear repeating several times. Be-

gin with the most striking fact in the whole story. Make the first two or three sentences tell the whole in a nutshell Then begin a new paragraph and start in on the details, enlarging on the subject as much as necessary to fill the limit of words allowed you. Don't use a useless word; yet do not skeletonize anything sent for publication—that is, do not drop out the little words, "the," "of," and the rest, but write the story just as it is to be printed. Very few papers nowadays want their telegraphic matter skeletonized; the money saved in the telegraph bill is more than lost in the time spent by the copy reader in filling out the missing words. And don't get in any spread-eagle adjectives or involved rhetoric or high-sounding phrases which the occasion does not warrant. You will only get the copy reader's execrations on your head when he cuts them out. Use short sentences, short words and simple constructions; these are always the stronger.

Such an article will be easily handled by the telegraph editor; he will have no trouble in trimming it down or expanding it to suit the space at his command. He will like to receive your stuff, and you will in consequence have more orders than otherwise. When some event worth a two-column article occurs the managing editor will give you the assignment instead of sending a special staff re-

porter from the office to do it; so that when you send in your "string*" to be cashed at the end of the month it will be a good deal longer than that of your rival who does not know these small but important points.

In sending news by wire, begin with the date line, as provided for in the blanks furnished at the telegraph office, and in using the words "yesterday," "today," etc., always apply them with reference to the date under which you are writing. Newspapers do not use the year in their date lines. Follow with your story, without preliminary or heading of any kind, sign your full name at the end, and on the bottom of the last sheet do not fail to write, "Filed 4:30 p. m.," or whatever the hour and minute may be when you hand the message to the operator. Both the preliminary query and the dispatch itself are sent "collect," that is, they are paid for by the paper. All newspapers have special rates with the telegraphic companies, making the cost of service considerably less than in the case of ordinary individuals.

A country correspondent is especially in need of some means of rapid transit. He

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*It is the custom on most papers for "space" writers to clip out of a copy of the sheet each day the matter they have written, and to paste these bits of paper in a long continuous strip which is measured with a column rule and paid for by the number of columns it contains. Like printers, who do the same with duplicate proofs of the type they have set, editors technically term this a "string."

ought to have a horse or bicycle, for when an important event occurs in his territory he must "get there" at once. "Get the news at any cost," is practically the motto of all the leading journals. The city reporter's expense account for cab and carriage hire often amounts to almost as much as his salary. Any good paper will cheerfully pay a country correspondent's expenses, provided only that he gets the news and gets it quickly.

Report facts. Stick to the truth. Keep your promises. I know that it seems to be flying in the face of the profession to give advice like this. But it is sound advice and will lead to the greatest success in the end, though sharp reporters may sneer and tell you otherwise. It pays to state facts, because they are more stubborn than the stubbornest kicker; everybody must agree with them whether he wants to or not. And it pays, too, to keep promises. I once asked one of the most successful editors in Chicago what would be the first advice he would give a beginner in journalism. "I would tell him never to violate a promise," was the reply. A newspaper man is often placed in such a position that he can get valuable information by promising not to use it until some future time or under certain conditions. There are men who consider it smart and enterprising to get news in that way and then laugh in the

face of the person who gave it and print it in their next issue. This may be clever according to some people's standards, but it is decidedly short-sighted and the worst kind of policy, from a merely business standpoint.

To sum up the chief points which the reporter must watch: Be quick in sending your news, for news, like buckwheat cakes, is not good for much after it gets cold. Write your best point first, so that it will strike the eye and make the reader look at it. Be clear, or you will never be anything. Learn to be brief first, and there will be plenty of time to learn the art of writing against space afterward. Never let anybody "scoop" you. Be sure of your facts before you write anything derogatory to a man's or woman's character, for a libel suit against the paper may mean good-by to your reportorial head. Don't editorialize—that is, don't color your statements even with an adjective or an adverb that will signify your personal opinion of the merits of a disputed case, unless you have proofs on which to base such an opinion, and then give the proofs and leave the opinion out.

EDITORIAL-ROOM METHODS.

Editorial work is radically different from reportorial work. In some respects editing is the opposite of reporting, for its essential element is criticism and repression, while that of reporting is production and the representation of things as they are, not as they ought to be.

An editor's work may be of two kinds: either corrective or productive — correcting other writers' copy or writing original comments or opinions, called editorials. There is no fixed system of promotion from one position to another in a newspaper office, but it is most usual for a reporter to get a start in desk work, as the editorial function is modestly termed, by being made a copy reader. In this case, instead of being given an assignment and being sent out to write something, he remains in the office and reads over the copy submitted by the other members of the staff, blue pencil in hand, rewriting, cutting down, amplifying and polishing, becoming thereby jointly responsible with the reporter for the correctness of the article and taking almost the entire responsibility

for the matter as to its general tone, and its liability to make trouble of any kind if published.

Of course, this work of revision, like the original work of production, is under the supervision of the city editor if it be city matter, or otherwise of the managing editor. The city editor outlines to the reporter beforehand in a general way the chief points that he wants made prominent and the standpoint from which the article shall be written, if it is something involving the editorial policy of the paper. The copy reader is under the same instructions and it is his business to see that the reporter has followed orders, that the style of the paper has been adhered to, that the words are correctly spelled and the sentences grammatically formed, that the matter is properly paragraphed—in short, that it is all ready for the printer, including the marks to show in what size of type it is to be printed, which parts of it shall be leaded and which solid, and including, too, the writing of the appropriate headlines and subheads.

As a rule, a reporter does not write the heading of his own article. That is left for the more responsible and more expert judgment of the copy reader. Perhaps one object of this rule is also to make it absolutely necessary for each statement to undergo the

scrutiny of a second pair of eyes before it can get to the composing room, thus insuring the detection of any gross errors or improprieties that might otherwise get into print. Even when the city editor himself writes an article he has to submit it to a copy reader and undergo the scrutiny of the blue pencil the same as the most verdant recruit in the reportorial ranks.

The telegraph editor is simply a copy reader with a little more independence, a little heavier responsibility and a little higher pay. This is a position which is often the next step in advancement from that of copy reader in the local room. The telegraph editor is under the control of the managing editor, but he is for the most part left in undisturbed control of all the matter that comes over the wires. If he makes errors in the treatment of his stuff he is called down by his superior and admonished not to let it occur again. Too many little inaccuracies or one glaring "bull" will suffice to set him adrift; the position is one that demands a man who does not have to be watched all the time.

Thus, while the city editor is the autocrat of the news within a radius of 100 miles, the telegraph editor is boss of the rest of the world, editorially speaking—except in cases where the managing editor chooses to exer-

cise his superior authority. Thus theoretically the telegraph editor and city editor are on a par; but practically the position of the city editor is far more important and lucrative—to the same extent, in fact, as local news is more influential and interesting than that from far-off places.

The exchange editor is also practically a copy reader under the direction of the managing editor. He is the man who writes with the shears. It is his duty to look through the newspapers and magazines from all over the world, in search of interesting general reading matter and pointed comments of other editors, to re-edit these clippings so that they will fit the style and general policy of the paper on which he is employed, to give them the proper credit lines telling what periodical they are from, and to write new headlines that will suit the typographical make-up of his paper. Exchange reading demands the news instinct and the highest grade of newspaper talent as emphatically as any other position on the staff. But, as an error in this department is not likely to be followed by such immediate or serious consequences as an error in the work of the telegraph man or of the local copy readers, exchange reading is sometimes made the starting point for a beginner in city newspaper work, especially if he has had

some all-around experience on a country paper. But it requires a trained and quick eye to edit successfully, even with a pair of shears.

An exchange editor must have the faculty of swift reading. He has daily to go through a stack of papers half as high as himself, and must have the ability to know at a glance if there is anything on a page that he wants, and to run his eye down an editorial column and pick out its salient paragraph in a moment. A man or woman must have accurate judgment, good taste, and up-to-date knowledge on all subjects, to be a successful exchange reader.

As for department editors, such as the dramatic critic, book reviewer, financial, railroad and real estate editors, and the rest, varying in number according to the size of the paper and the strength of its staff, their work involves a combination of both editorial and reportorial methods. Some of these are under the direction of the managing editor, and others—the sporting editor, for instance—are controlled by the city editor. Certain of the positions, like that of financial editor, dramatic critic, and the like, requiring the work of specialists, are among the best paid in the profession; their fortunate occupants are also allowed a great deal of latitude, both in what they write and when and where they

write it. Such places are usually intrusted only to men or women of long experience in newspaper work who have developed a special aptitude for that particular kind of writing.

As the obtainment of a position in any of these special fields almost of necessity requires a preliminary apprenticeship at general reporting, it will not be profitable for the beginner to go any deeper into their methods at present.

And now we come to the writing of editorials—the productive work pure and simple, as distinguished from the work of copy reading. The editorial writers are, next to the managing editor, the editor-in-chief, and perhaps the city editor, the best paid men on the newspaper staff. Their salaries range from $10,000 a year on certain large New York dailies down to $1,500 or $2,000 on the newspapers of the smaller cities.

The editorial writers are under the direct control of the editor-in-chief, who usually writes upon the most important question of the day himself, and who has the final and authoritative say as to how a topic is to be handled. The way he decides this is usually not by assigning subjects to the various writers and indicating how the topics are to be treated, but by allowing each editorial writer as far as possible to choose his own subjects, treat them as he thinks best, and

hand the article in to the editor-in-chief, who thus becomes in his turn a copy reader. The fate of each article depends upon whether the expression of opinion contained in it coincides with the ideas of the chief and with the policy of the paper. If it does not, it is revised or thrown into the wastebasket, according to the circumstances, the same as the stuff of the poorest-paid country correspondent. Whether or not a man's article is printed makes no immediate difference in his salary, but as nobody enjoys writing for the wastebasket a new writer soon gets the motion of the journalistic ship and attacks only those subjects which he can swing acceptably to the chief pilot; or, if he fails to get his sea legs after a reasonable time, he is summarily dropped overboard.

An editorial article, according to the present accepted meaning of the term, is a critical interpretation of events. It takes up the more important topics of news and philosophizes upon them—that is, attempts to point out the relation of isolated facts to each other and to general systems. It goes beneath the surface of things and seeks for causes, effects and remedies. In this aspect M. Blowitz's dictum is probably true: "One good comment is worth ten informations." The editorial opinion of a well-trained mind is to news matter what the finished linen is to the raw

flax. But the trouble is that one man wants his raw material woven into a free trade editorial and another wants a protective tariff product; one wants liberalism and another orthodoxy, while—and this is another but important aspect of the subject—the great majority want nothing but superficiality and mere amusement. This is why the editorial at present is tending to deteriorate into flippancy or to disappear entirely.

The best model of the editorial combines a brief restatement of the news involved, with clear-cut comment thereon, made from the point of view of the editor. An editorial may also sometimes consist almost entirely of a résumé of some news matter that has appeared piecemeal in the telegraphic or local columns day by day; in fact, many people read the editorial page mostly for the condensations of news found there. But the essence of the editorial, after all, is the comment contained in it. This is the official opinion of the paper, and is a thing separate and apart from the news columns, which latter, it is generally agreed among editors, should be as free from coloring or bias of opinion as possible.

The writing of the best class of editorials requires ripe judgment and a wide range of knowledge, especially in contemporaneous political and social history. No beginner, be

he college graduate or not, need aspire to this position of journalistic generalship without having served his time first in the ranks.

In conclusion, a word on book reviewing: The book review is essentially an editorial. This fact alone may serve to explain to many aspiring literary novices why their proffered services as book critics are rejected by newspapers. The ripeness of the judgment expressed in a book review is at least half its value; the other half lies in the skillful summing up of the author's ideas or story in such a way that the reader of an article shall practically get all that is best in the book. As in the editorial, it is a mingling of news and comment. Not that the criticism need take up anything like half the space in the article; on the contrary, the best literary critics are those who, like Mr. Haseltine of the New York *Sun,* confine their expressions of opinion to a few incidental adjectives or adverbs and give all the rest of their space to retelling in brief what the author has told at length. But the few words of comment which they use are the right words, and there is, besides, a world of comment in their selection of material and indeed in the mere choice of books about which to write.

It is perhaps not so necessary that the aspirant to a position as literary editor should go through the usual reportorial training,

but the way of approach from without is rather more difficult, and the preliminary drill must certainly be no less exacting of its kind. To the man or woman who is bent on doing this kind of work I would first vouchsafe the information that, though the occupation is clean and attractive, the pay is usually comparatively meager because there are so many who are seeking after that genteel kind of work. If money is your object, you had better be a "hog editor" than a "book editor."

If the aspirant still remains obdurate, I would advise him to begin, on his own hook, reading books—good old standard works for the most part—and writing a review of each, modeled after the style of some good critic, but entirely original in the opinions expressed. Let the aspirant set down exactly his private opinion of the book, especially seeking out the weak points, for these are most apt to escape him and are, moreover, usually considered the best "stuff" in the newspaper office, though the editors will not tell you so. After you have written two or three dozen such articles in the seclusion of your own room, not before, you may venture to seek out the literary editor of some paper and show him a sample or two of your work and ask for the privilege of writing for his columns a review of some book that he has

on hand, expecting therefore no pay except the copy of the book reviewed. The getting of this privilege, if you have no acquaintance with any one on the staff, will probably be no easy task; but, unfortunately, the guide to the path of newspaper life, like the preacher, must leave each pilgrim to cross the darkest stream alone, trusting only in that inspired text, "Where there's a will there's a way."

This completes the outline of the work done by the editorial staff of a paper, so far as it will be profitable for the beginner to investigate it. Dramatic criticism is similar to literary criticism, but is still more the work of a specialist. Financial and commercial writing, too, are special branches that are best approached by the reportorial route. The woman's department will be treated in a separate chapter hereafter.

This, then, is the great intellectual machine called the editorial force. The editor-in-chief, who stands at the head, sets the pace, not only for the editorial columns, but for the whole paper, and his work is for the most part confined to editing editorial utterances and indicating by suggestions and criticisms the lines to be followed by his lieutenant, the managing editor. The latter, who is second in authority and in size of salary, keeps the city editor, the telegraph man, the exchange reader and the more important of

the department men straight by maintaining a close watch over their work as it appears in the paper each day and reprimanding them for anything that does not meet his approval. In important cases he may look over their proofs and make changes that he deems necessary, but usually he shapes the course of the sub-editors by simply telling them what they ought not to have done and warning them not to let it occur again. Words of praise are few and far between; if a sub-editor hears no adverse criticism from his superior he may rest pretty well assured that he is giving excellent satisfaction.

The methods and the work of the various editors and sub-editors will differ according to the temperament and ability of each, but there are certain bounds beyond which they may not go and certain unpardonable mistakes which, though made but once, will mean discharge. To be scooped is probably the most heinous on the list; it is almost always an unpardonable sin, punishable by swift official death.*

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*In the summer of 1893 a certain important bank failed in New York. The dispatch reached the Chicago papers late. The telegraph editor of the *Tribune* glanced over it and through some inadvertency failed to notice the importance of the news as affecting Chicago; he accordingly cut the dispatch down to two stickfuls and ran it into the paper under an ordinary two-line head. Every other paper had a column of it, with a slug head, as it deserved. That one error caused the immediate discharge of three men from the telegraph room.

And he who errs at the other extreme meets no better fate, as the following anecdote will show. Whenever a prominent man or woman is lying at the point of death the larger papers keep in type an obituary article ready to use the moment the telegraph announces that the end has come. A few years ago, when Harriet Beecher Stowe was not expected to live, a prominent Chicago morning paper had such a post-mortem story on the standing galley ready for an emergency. By some unaccountable misunderstanding the night editor dumped it into the forms, and the next morning the world was informed with touching pathos of the great woman's death. Mrs. Stowe, as you are aware, is still living. The night editor who committed this unwitting deed of woman slaughter was one of the most careful and able newspaper men in Chicago, and is now getting $7,500 a year as managing news editor of a New York daily. But his talent did not save his head from dropping into the basket bright and early on that funereal morning.

There are two suggestive reflections that may properly be indulged in at this point. One is that the hired editor's tenure of office, even at best, is a very precarious thing. The other is that if he is really a good man he rarely has difficulty, when one publisher "lets him go," in finding another place.

There are a thousand little devices which the desk editor, as well as the successful writer, must know, for serving up matter in readable shape. They might almost be called tricks of the profession. When viewed separately they seem rather trifling, but they are, none the less, when taken all together, very important. And they are points, too, which it is almost impossible to pick up anywhere except in the newspaper office and by actual practice. Take, for instance, the various means used to break up the monotony of the printed column and give the matter a bright and interesting look.

A newspaper writer who knows his business will take a prosy, forbidding article suggestive of encyclopedias and delinquent tax notices, and, if it has any material in it worth publishing at all, will make the most interesting and breezy kind of story of it. First of all, he will lighten its general appearance to the eye by a judicious breaking up into paragraphs. Some of the plain statements he may expand into a bit of dialogue, making the speakers tell the story in their questions and answers. Any attempt at flowery rhetoric or any superfluous words will fall at the first touch of his ruthless blue pencil. He will drop in a question here, an exclamation there, and a touch of brogue, perhaps, where the circumstances warrant it. A sentence will

sometimes be inverted in its construction by way of variety; a short sentence will be dropped deftly in between two long ones; or part of the story may be put into the mouth of an imaginary neighbor, to shift the responsibility of the statement or throw the idea into more striking relief.

The writer of any kind ought to have the materials for his article in his hands, or, rather, in his head, before he begins to write. But in daily newspaper work the time at one's disposal is so limited that it is often impossible to get the minor facts with which to deck out the main idea contained in some important but meager news bulletin. In order to make an article out of the bare announcement at hand the editor must supply the missing details from his imagination. To use the technical term, it becomes necessary to "fake" more or less, in order to make a fit setting in which to display the nugget of news as it deserves. No doubt many people will hold up their hands in horror at the idea that any man, especially one who believes in the high mission of the press, should make a confession like this, without a blush. Yet to this has newspaper ethics come.

So eager is the public for news, and so hot is the competition among publishers, that many an event has to be written up in the past tense before it has actually occurred, be-

cause it will be over when the paper appears and the people will look for it in the paper. The uninitiated seem utterly oblivious to the fact that it takes time to write, edit, set in type, stereotype and print an item of news. Hardly a day passes in the office of a city evening paper that some one does not come in about ten minutes before 5 o'clock with an item about Sally Jones's new baby, or something equally startling, and ask to have it printed in the 5 o'clock edition. When the office boy or the editor gently breaks the truth to such visitors—that the 5 o'clock edition went to press just two hours ago—they are prone to shake the dust of the office from their feet with an injured, you-know-you're-lying look on their incredulous brows. Yet they have been told the exact truth.

So, if an event occurs or a lecture is given as much as five minutes before press time the paper must contain a report of it. Here is where the highly developed imagination of the reporter is called into play. He has to imagine the wedding or the ball as it will probably appear, and describe the scene as he sees it in his mind's eye; or, if it is a lecture, he must get a peep at the speaker's manuscript beforehand and report the speech as if he had heard it delivered. So skillful does he become at this sort of thing that even those who have witnessed the actual event

usually cannot detect the fact that the writer did not compose the article on the spot.

This rather doubtful *fin-du-siecle* sort of journalism is perhaps excusable as long as the imaginative writing is confined to non-essentials and is done by one who has in him at least the desire to represent the truth. Readers may settle the ethical part of the question for themselves; the fact remains that all newspapers employ this method more or less, usually keeping their forms open as long as possible so as to make changes when the accomplished facts are found at the last moment not to tally with the forecast that is in type. It is equally true that he who wields the "fake," even in this mild form, is toying with an edged tool that is likely, sooner or later, to wound fatally even the most skillful operator.

One November the astronomers announced that there would be a meteoric shower of unusual brilliancy on a certain night. An enterprising editor put into type beforehand an elaborate article describing just how the heavens looked from certain housetops in the city, and arranged to print it in the paper of the following morning. The time came for going to press, and, alas! the whole night had been cloudy. In vain he waited and strained his eyes at the sanctum window to catch even the glimmer of a meteor. At last he did not dare to delay the press a minute

longer; there was still a chance that the clouds might break before morning, and then nobody would know the difference. The article was allowed to run. It rained pitchforks all the rest of the night, but so far as the world knew it rained no stars. The paper was the laughing stock of the city the next morning, and the enterprising editor had no need that day to feel of his neck to see whether his head was on, for it wasn't.

In spite of the fact that editors come to grief once in a while by its use, this trick of drawing upon the imagination for the non-essential parts of an article is certainly one of the most valuable secrets of the profession at its present stage of development. Truth in essentials, imagination in non-essentials, is considered a legitimate rule of action in every office. The paramount object is to make an interesting story. If the number of copies sold is any criterion, the people prefer this sort of journalism to one that is rigidly accurate. Of course, if the reporter has been on the ground and has the minutiæ of the circumstances surrounding the event, he had better draw upon them for his garnishings, though even then he can easily fall into the dull and prosy error of being tiresomely exact about little things like the minutes and seconds or the state of the atmosphere or the precise words of the speaker. A newspaper is not a mathematical treatise.

WRITING A SPECIAL

"Special stories" play an important part in modern journalism. The typical "special" is a long article making some pretentions to exhaustiveness and combining the three styles of matter of which a newspaper is composed—news, editorial comment and general reading matter. But a special may be confined to any two or to any one of these elements. It may be simply a mass of new and interesting facts on a given subject, or it may be merely an overgrown editorial, or finally it may be an essay on more or less ancient history. These three are named in the order of their desirability and salability; a paper will almost always buy the first, and almost never the last.

The acceptability of such an article depends largely on four things: its contents, its timeliness, the editor's previous covering of the same subject, and the state of the paper's exchecker. If it be a news special—that is, if it be made up of facts never before published—it will have the best chance of publication, despite faults of composition or style. If it be editorial in nature and express opin-

ions its acceptance will depend also upon whether such opinions tally with the policy of the paper or not. If it be a rehash of facts already more or less widely known, its only hopes of finding favor in the editor's sight will lie in the skill with which the story is retold and the timeliness of such a recapitulation of the subject.

This element of timeliness is a very important one in special work, as it is in all newspaper writing. A news article finds its cause in the occurrence of the event which it chronicles. The editorial rests its excuse for existence upon the news article which has provoked its comment. And so with the special there must be some peg of news upon which to hang the story. Like the introduction of a fresh topic in conversation, the publication of every newspaper article ought to be suggested by something. A special, therefore, ought at least to begin with a reference to some new bit of information or some recent turn in affairs that has directed people's attention to that subject. A newspaper is expected to treat of things that people are talking about, and if it so far departs from its normal province of news purveyor as to print something partly historical it must at least have the semblance of an excuse for doing so. In short, every story must have a *raison d'etre;* otherwise the newspaper would

become a cyclopedia or a treatise on ancient history. This idea of timeliness, too, applies, though not quite so stringently, to magazine writing.

Special articles when written by some one not on the regular staff are usually submitted "on space," that is, they are sent to the editor with the understanding that if printed they are to be paid for by the column at the usual rates of the paper. These rates vary from $10 on New York papers to $2 on well-to-do country journals. The space that a certain article will fill of course depends upon the size of the type and the length of the column. The average column of ordinary length and of thirteen-pica width contains, in minion type, about 1600 words. Nearly all country correspondents and irregular contributors are paid thus by the column, and in New York even the regular reporters working on general assignments nearly all write on space; sometimes they make $100 a week, and sometimes $10.

As special articles can often be written at home and sent by mail to the editor, this is a field in which women have as good a chance as men; and as this presents one avenue of access to the regular work on the staff—and probably the most available one for women—a few suggestions on how to go about the matter may be of interest to aspirants of both sexes.

If you have a personal acquaintance on some paper, or a private "pull" of any kind, you may be able to get a position through these means. If so, you are one of those lucky mortals that have no need of a book like this. But if you are a stranger to all newspaper offices, there are at least three ways in which you may legitimately lay siege to them.

One way is to go to a managing editor, introduce yourself with a letter of recommendation, tell him what you want to do and what you are quite sure you can do, and ask for a trial. This is the method that the green hand usually adopts, and it is about the poorest way in the world to get employment on a newspaper, though it is better than not trying at all. The editor, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, will hear your tale with more or less impatience, and cut you off with the statement that his staff is complete at present. Perhaps, if he is in an unusually good humor, he may ask you to leave your address so that he may send for you in case he should want some one in the near future. But he almost never sends.

Another way is to study up one or more new subjects for articles that you think will be timely and interesting, go to the editor, give him an outline in a few words of the stories that you have in mind, and ask per-

mission to write up one of them and submit it for his approval. This is a much better way than the other, though you are still liable to be politely informed that the paper has no need of outside help at present and that those assignments are all covered.

A third method, and for general use the best, is to select your own subjects, after a careful study of the style of articles in the paper for which you intend to write, make the most interesting and newsy story of which your pen is capable, and submit it to the editor either personally or by mail; your article will have just as good a chance if it goes by mail as if you handed it to the editor yourself, and if you enclose enough stamps it will be mailed back to you in case it is rejected. If that happens, as it most assuredly will in many cases, the only thing is, not to give up right away, but to send it to some other paper in whose columns it is likely to fit, and to keep on doing this until the article either proves itself worthless or finds the right place.

An editor places very little reliance upon recommendations or talk about what a new writer can do; all the recommendation he wants or will be satisfied with is a sample of good work done by the applicant. After he has seen and accepted a few special stories he will for the first time think seriously of

giving the author of them a permanent position if there happens to be a vacancy on his staff.

Half the secret of getting your specials into print lies in being first on hand with a piece of news that the editor wants; and the other half lies in having the ideas in plain English, arranged on the best-first plan outlined in a previous lesson.

How can you tell what the editor wants, do you ask? Look at this morning's paper and see what he thought, when he sat down at his desk last night, that his readers would want today. Put yourself in his place and try to think what those same readers will want tomorrow and next day. If you can forestall any of those wants and put the right kind of article in the editor's hands in time, you will get $5 or $6 from a Chicago paper for each column printed, or $10 from a New York paper, and welcome, whether you are on the staff or an utter stranger.

But, for the love of literature, don't offer the editor a dissertation on "The Beauty of Morality" when he is engaged in a hand-to-hand fight with the telephone, or present him with a description of the temple at Karnak when he is struggling to get a report of a World's Fair fire, or make him hate the sight of your manuscript by inflicting upon him something about butterflies on the planet

Mars when he is in the throes of a national election.

Special writing has its advantages and its successes, but, to tell the truth, most writers not on a newspaper staff find space work a rather unreliable means for keeping the wolf from the door. The objection to it is the same as that which confronts the writer of magazine articles: one can never be sure of what is going to suit the editor. The best that one can do is to study carefully the nature of the articles a periodical has published in the past, learn thus as nearly as possible the taste of the editor, and then write something that will, as far as one can judge, conform to his standard. Perhaps in four cases out of five the story will be returned with thanks—if stamps were enclosed—or if published will be so cut down as no longer to be profitable. There is one comfort, however; if the article has any real merit it will find acceptance with some editor, sooner or later, provided the writer tries it often enough. And in undergoing this inevitable disappointment over rejected manuscript the beginner should never forget that every time he submits an article on space he is asking for the full pay of a writer who has spent years in learning the profession. The only thing for him to do, therefore, is to be humble and patient, pocket his disappointment, and keep on trying.

The special is really one of the most elaborate and difficult products of journalism. For the beginner to attempt it is therefore a good deal like trying to reach the top of the hill at a single bound. And yet this is almost the only path open to the great crowd of aspirants outside the sanctum—including the majority of woman writers. It is a hard sort of competitive examination in which only the few who stand highest get the coveted prizes. Despite its difficulty it is a legitimate road, and, with the exception of that lying through the country newspaper office, it is the best available. Besides, the fact that the material for this kind of articles lies ready at hand for anybody who has news scent enough to recognize it makes the attempt to scale the height not such a foolhardy thing after all.

Writing an acceptable newspaper special is at least not so difficult a feat as writing a magazine article that will be printed. Newspaper material is not submitted to so rigid a scrutiny, and the papers that want such special articles far outnumber the magazines. The newspaper special that is in demand at present is apparently the same thing as a short magazine article. It is true that the one grades off insensibly into the other. Each contains anywhere from 500 to 10,000 words —usually about 3,000—and each treats as a rule of some topic of the time. But on close

inspection the average quality of the newspaper article will be found to differ from that of the magazine essay as materially as the two publications differ in form; in fact, the mental and material differences between the two resemble each other. The newspaper article is the lighter of the two. It aims at sparkle rather than at accuracy—at entertainment rather than instruction; it is ephemeral, and as a rule is meant to be so.

The same rule should be followed in writing a special as in reporting a news story: when possible, the brightest, crispest, newest thing in the article should be put first. Bits of dialogue breaking up the monotonous solidity of the column, if cleverly done, will add to the salability of the story. Wit or humor is always the best of material, and, as elsewhere in the world, will make its way and win a hearing where staid and sober wisdom is left to wait without the gates. If you express any opinions that might provoke discussion, remember that you are treading on sacred editorial ground, and venture nothing that will conflict in the least with the policy of the paper on the subject in question. Avoid religious doctrinal topics entirely. For the rest, you will have things pretty much your own way; the judgment, fancies, and necessities of the editor will be the jury to decide whether or not you have chosen a

subject acceptable to the paper and treated it skillfully enough to entitle the article to publication.

What will make good subjects for such articles? Almost any public character, object or institution on which you have something new to offer. Any topic with human interest in it. Anything that you would like to read about, yourself, and that half the people in your street would like to read. George W. Smalley, the European correspondent, came pretty close to the truth when he remarked that he knew of but one definition for news: "It is what people will want to read tomorrow morning." All that is necessary, then, is to write something that comes within this definition—and convince the editor of it.

Select subjects that you know about and that everybody else does not know. Choose topics in which you are interested. Further than this nobody can help you much on the subject of subjects. If you love birds, write about the funny tricks of the blue jay or the wicked brawls of the English sparrow. If you know more about tramps, or toads, or theosophy, than other people, put your knowledge into attractive shape and get $10 a column for it.

Almost any city or town will furnish at least a few subjects. For instance, some

noted man and the story of his life; write it up just before he and his wife celebrate their silver wedding anniversary, or before his seventieth birthday, or just before his death if he is nearing his end; have the story in the editor's hands at the opportune moment when he is feeling the need of it, and the chances are that it will go into print. Queer or funny or tragic incidents in the history of a town or school, a hospital or a boat club—recalled at a time when for any reason public attention is directed toward that institution—will make salable matter if written in a simple and chatty style. A neighborhood feud, a ludicrous or tragic quarrel between neighbors, the pathetic story of some blighted life—any odd or entertaining page from the great book of humanity which lies open to all who have eyes to read—these are in every sense worthy your best efforts, for they are not only "good stuff" in a newspaper, but they are the choicest stock-in-trade of the novelist.

Space articles are almost always used without any signature, just as if they had been written by a regular reporter of the paper; in fact, it is often well to work in some reference to the *Times* or *Herald* or *Journal* reporter, as the case may be: but if you do this and it afterward becomes necessary to send the rejected manuscript to some other paper —well, a word to the astute sufficeth. Your

name and address should always appear in an upper corner of the first sheet of your copy, with sufficient stamps for the return of the manuscript if you want it sent back in case of rejection.

Don't waste time and divide your energies by juggling with a pen name. Use your own name and get it into print as often as you can. You will find it hard enough to get a paper to print any name at all with your article. Reputation is money to the writer, and you will have all you can do to make one name famous. The time is past when it is necessary even for a feminine writer to assume a masculine pseudonym. Pen names are no longer in style.

If you are a beginner, do not forget to leave the proper margins on your sheets, to avoid rolling your copy, and to leave about half your first page blank that the copy reader may have room in which to write the head lines. You are not expected to put any heading on your article, though it will do no harm to indicate by two or three well-chosen words the subject treated.

There are a few special writers like George Alfred Townsend, better known as "Gath," Margaret Sullivan, Mrs. Frank Leslie, Nellie Bly, Frank G. Carpenter, Edgar L. Wakeman, ex-Senator Ingalls, and a handful of English correspondents, like Harold Fred-

eric, George W. Smalley and Edmund Yates, who can get published almost anything that they write, with the signature to each article. But these fortunates are few and far between, and they have as a rule earned their prominence by years of previous preparation in obscurity, or by first making a name as authors of books or in public service. Or perhaps they have gained fame by distinguishing themselves in some difficult branch of the work, like Archibald Forbes, the war correspondent. There are, at any rate, a few who can make more money as free lances than they could as members of a staff.* But for the rank and file of newspaper writers such space work is only a means to an end, and that end is an editorial position that will give steady pay for steady work.

Occasional correspondence is a kind of special writing that is open to any writer living in a town or city in which for any reason there is an outside interest. For instance, a resident of a summer resort like Lake Geneva, Ill., might collect a lot of stories and personal sketches of prominent men and wo-

*Frank G. Carpenter recently told me that he never makes less than $5,000 a year from his syndicate articles, and that he and his wife by the same means paid for a trip around the world and cleared $8,000 besides from the travel letters which he had dictated and she had written on the typewriter during their journey. "We didn't work half as hard as the professional tourists, either," he added. But everybody has not that kind of abili y, to say nothing of that kind of wife.

men who are in their summer cottages there at the height of the season, and, by arranging them in the shape of a letter to a Chicago paper, make an acceptable article that would gladly be paid for at space rates. Or perhaps a woman living in Petoskey, Mich., might collect the humorous or otherwise interesting incidents that come to her notice during the season when the hay fever patients come flocking to that region for relief; to this she might add anecdotes on other Petoskey topics, compiling thus a letter that a Detroit or Grand Rapids paper might be glad to print and pay for. Such a letter can be sent to any paper that is likely to have readers interested in the subjects touched upon.

This is really nothing but a modified special with a date line at the top. It is subject to the same difficulties and the same rules as the ordinary special, only, it may deal with a wider variety of topics. It is the nearest approach to the old-time news letter that has survived the coming of the telegraph. This sort of matter will be paid for by editors, if accepted, at the same rate as news or special matter, and should be accompanied with a brief note like this:

Editor Detroit *Free Press*—Dear Sir:

Herewith is enclosed a bit of special correspondence on Petoskey topics which I should be pleased to have you use, in whole or in part, at your usual space rates.

I enclose stamps for return of manuscript if not found available. Yours truly, JEMIMA JONES.
PETOSKEY, Mich.

Such a letter may also be sent with an ordinary special story, though the mere name, address and stamps at the top of the first page are usually all that is necessary. The chief use of such a letter is to make clear the terms on which the matter is offered for publication. The smaller papers are usually unable to pay for contributed articles, though they are often willing enough to print them over the signature of the writer, without pay. The large city papers go on the principle that what is not worth paying for is not worth using. In any case, when anything personal of this kind is written to the editor, the briefer it is, the better.

In sending any unsolicited contribution to a paper, never forget that you are depending partly on chance and are dropping your hook into dark waters. If you fail to get a bite, do not be discouraged and give up fishing too quickly. There are so many regular sources from which a great daily gets material—the telegraphic press associations, the syndicate bureaus many of which supply excellent literature at low rates, the staff of trained writers in each office, and the special correspondents in all the great centers—that the outside contributor should rather be surprised when

an irregular article is accepted than when it is rejected. It cannot be denied that there is a woeful waste of time and energy in almost every case where a new writer tries this method of getting a foothold; but what else can we do? The number of persons who want to write for the press is constantly increasing, and these myriad manuscripts are flitting to and fro over the land, bombarding the editors and causing a world of useless work for them, the mail carriers and the aspirants for literary fame. Yet, as the existing system is constituted, this is the only chance for many of us. It is one more case of the survival of the fittest—or at least of the most persistent.

The journalistic novice may, however, save himself many a misguided effort if he will note the kinds of material that are most in demand. News always has the best chance. Even in the semi-literary matter used in the Sunday papers the news idea is predominant and there is but slim show for the magazine essay, however finished or deeply pondered. People are more important than things; the human interest is universal; the interest in science or scenery is limited. Travels abroad, unless they be written by a master hand and swing far from guide-book lines, are scarcely salable. The inside workings of the last political convention are worth far more than the details of the greatest battle of the revolu-

tion. This is not because the editor lacks patriotism, but because his readers are more interested in the present than in the past. And for a glimpse of the future the patrons of newspapers are still more eager; this is only a more refined phase of that universal human trait which, among the ignorant, gives fortune tellers their patronage. Hence the wise journalistic aspirant will keep in mind the never-ceasing rivalry of editors to get hold of any news that may have a bearing on the outcome of an approaching event of importance.

Anecdotes about people already known to the public are always legal tender in a newspaper office. Even quite trivial matters concerning the daily life or the ideas and preferences of noted men or women are considered "good stuff." The chief prerequisite is that the subject of the sketch shall be widely known to readers; whether he be famous or infamous is a distinction of minor importance. An anecdote that would be rejected as flat ,if told of yourself or of some other exemplary or harmless person, will be eagerly snapped up if it happens to relate to some notorious murderer. This is not because the editor is so wicked that his perverted taste counts you as a less important member of society than the man who aspires to the gallows; neither is it because the newspaper reader prefers

evil to good. It is simply an illustration of the universal fact that we are all more interested in people we know than in strangers.

When you write a private letter to a friend, you retail all the gossip, good and bad, about your common acquaintances. So it is when the newspaper man writes to his friends, the subscribers; he must talk about people who are already known or who have done something startling enough to entitle them to be introduced to the reader. Newspaper readers know a limited number of public characters by their names, just as they know a limited number of private acquaintances by their faces. These familiar names are the ones for the writer to conjure with, for they are the ones in which the world is most interested.

Never lose sight of the tastes and prejudices of those for whom you are writing. If as a young man you were writing a description of a football game to your mother you would make the scrimmage appear much more gentle and dignified than if you were telling your chum how you tackled that pestiferous Jones and brought him down with a crash. This editorial faculty you exercise almost unconsciously by keeping in mind the character of the person to whom the letter is addressed. The news sense and the editorial conscience are simply extensions of the same faculty.

Remember that readers like to be interested, surprised—even shocked sometimes. But they never like to be disgusted. If you must describe something revolting make it as mild as possible. Remember, too, that the strongest prejudice in the human breast is the religious prejudice, the whole way from Catholicism to Atheism. It never pays to run up against it.

By experience the editor of each paper comes to know almost instinctively what his readers desire, and as failure to meet that desire means ruin for his paper he is ever on the alert for news and literary features that will meet these requirements. That is why he is so patient in wading through the mass of stuff that every mail lands on his desk; and that, too, is why the obscure beginner has a hearing.

Often the editor can tell at a glance that a manuscript is not available, and one object of this book is to teach beginners not to condemn themselves on their very first pages. For blacksmith work one look is usually enough; for another grade of work a perusal of half the article may be necessary to convince the editor that he cannot use it; other manuscripts he must read through before he can decide for or against them; and occasionally he welcomes with a sigh of relief a gem that appears among the mass of mediocrity.

He is really anxious for suitable material and feels almost repaid for all his drudgery when he can discover a new writer who can add to the interest of his columns. His reason for the rejection of a story is not that its author is unknown, nor that it is unfit for publication otherwheres, nor that he is prejudiced in any respect, but only that he has but limited space and wishes to fill this with the material most to his readers' liking. His feeling at rejecting a manuscript is often greater than the chagrin of the author at having his work returned.

Here are a few pertinent "rathers" emitted by a Washington editor which it would be well for expectant contributors to bear in mind:

Rather restrain your thoughts within a column than let them run riot through two or more columns. A newspaper is not intended for the publication of essays.

Rather have your article typewritten than prepared with a pen. Absolute legibility insures dispatch in sending the manuscript one way or the other—to the printer or to the post office.

Rather deal with fresh every-day material about individuals than with events surrounded by a halo of history. A newspaper is not a memorial volume.

Rather permit the editor to judge of a manuscript than submit your own explanations in writing. He has to read enough without being obliged to peruse either your autobiography or your critique on your own production.

Rather let the editor be a nonentity as far as you are concerned than seek to meet him. At his office his time is fully occupied by work, and away from the office he is not an editor.

Nobody can give you new and original thoughts or even tell you on what subjects the spirit may move you most potently. Nor can any one say that you will write, if the spirit does move you, spontaneously, as the thrush sings; for you won't, even though you be a Macaulay. You may be a born writer, and yet you will have to learn to shape your thought, laboriously and patiently, by long practice, just as the great painter learns his art. In fact, the work of the artist and that of the writer are very closely allied. Both draw pictures from life—either real or ideal —the one in colors, the other in words. It is hard to tell which has the broader and more fascinating field before him—the artist or the novelist. Either vocation requires a certain natural fitness and an absorbing love for the work, and both are equally worthy the grandest efforts of which any man or woman is capable.

WOMEN IN NEWSPAPER WORK.

Almost all parts of the vast field of literary work now lie open to women and invite them to enter. One of the most wonderful changes of this age of change is the crusade of womankind in the direction of business and away from her traditional domain of the kitchen and the household. It has caused the demand for servant girls to exceed the supply to an expensive degree, but, as long as the men are not left to starve, they ought not to raise an outcry about that. Women certainly have the right to do whatever kind of work they prefer, provided they do it better than those with whom they come into competition. Right there is the rub when it comes to journalism, as we shall see later.

As Victor Hugo remarked, the woman of the nineteenth century is a conundrum, but we will not give her up. She does show an alarming inclination to leave the quiet of the household for the din of the forum, but when a woman will she will, and there's an end on't. Just now the pen is claiming its full share of this ambitious feminine army. Scarcely any other profession, unless it be that of

teaching, gives women so nearly an equal chance with men as does that of literature in this last decade of the nineteenth century. In the field of fiction it is an even race between the writers of the gentler and those of the sterner sex; there is no longer any need for the woman to assume a masculine pen name in order to gain a hearing with publishers. As a writer of juvenile fiction the literary woman is far and away ahead of her brother, notwithstanding her weakness for the silly goody-goody bosh that fills up our Sunday-school libraries. Juvenile writing is one of the things that women are fitted for by nature. The world has come at last to admit that a woman's brain is as good as a man's brain, though it still has a stubborn notion that women ought to confine their efforts to certain suitable lines, like the one just named.

A glance at the shelves of any great library will show that the number of feminine authors is becoming greater every year; take our magazines collectively and you will find Mary's name among their contributors fully as often as John's. In newspaper work alone it is different; here the field is still decidedly in the hands of the men, and the very nature of the work demands that it remain so, to a large extent. Yet even on the newspaper the women have a strong foothold and

are making a larger place for themselves every year. Especially in the journalism of the smaller towns, where the stress and strain are not so heavy as in the cities, women are doing a good deal of unostentatious but successful work at the desk, and many of our largest country weeklies owe their bright paragraphs to the faithful labors of ambitious women.

But on the large metropolitan daily the outlook for women is not so bright. Much of the work is too arduous, too exhausting, and for the most part too rude in its requirements for the gentler sex. The local reporting work deals too exclusively with men and the affairs of men to allow of a fair chance in it for women; and the immense amount of technical business knowledge required to be a successful copy reader is something which few women under present conditions are likely to possess, while the amount of nervous strain and concentrated mental and physical energy demanded at the editorial desk are things for which women as a rule are not fitted by nature.

For these and other reasons the great city dailies will probably long continue in the hands of the masculine half of the race and will therefore long remain essentially men's papers, setting forth men's ideas of life and government, and studiously looking askance

at the ideas and reforms of the Woman's Christian Temperance Unions and Woman's Rights Associations. But if these latter continue to labor for their cause and to "keep everlastingly at it," as they seem determined to and as they certainly have a right to if they wish it, we may some day see a revolution in this profession as we have seen in school teaching. My mission, however, is not that of seer but of chronicler. Let us look at the chances for a woman today in city newspaper work.

Most large papers now find it necessary to run a "Woman's Department," devoted to the household, the fashions, and a liberal padding of more or less silly twaddle written "by women for women." This department and the juvenile and society columns are the woman editor's strongest hold.

"What!" exclaims the strongminded and sensible woman, "Are fashions and society gossip—these husks of frivolity—the best that you can offer us on the large city journal?"

Unfortunately, that is about all at present. In fact, that is all for which the average woman's training has fitted her. She cannot expect to write about either business or politics without having devoted years to their study, as men do; and business and politics are the body and breath of journalism. So,

when I state, what is the fact, that women are generally looked on with disfavor as applicants for active newspaper work, it is for much the same reason as that which would keep a woman, though starving, from getting employment as a coal heaver. She can't do the work in the one case any more than in the other, and never will be able to, no matter how eagerly she may desire it, so long as she gets no sterner training than that of the girls' boarding school, the parlor and the ballroom. Whether she should leave these and seek the other or not should be a matter for her own tastes to decide. One thing is sure, she can not become oak and still remain ivy.

After the feminine and juvenile departments the next best chance that a woman has, under present conditions, on a city newspaper, is as a "special" writer, as described in a previous chapter. Then, as a literary or exchange editor, she has a chance, though certainly not an even chance, to get a position. Finally, as an all-around reporter, she has at least a little show, but only on the largest papers where she, so to speak, does the frills and fringes of reportorial work; editors and publishers are beginning to realize that it pays to write up at least the greater events—especially those in which both men and women are actors—as seen from a woman's standpoint, as well as from the ordinary point of view.

For instance, all the largest journals of the country sent one or two woman reporters to the last national nominating conventions; even at the Democratic convention in Chicago the New York papers were represented by one woman in almost every reportorial corps. So, too, most of the New York papers sent women to the World's Fair to write specials independently of the men who were the regular correspondents. And so we have articles headed, "World's Fair Dedication as Seen by a Woman," "Derby Day Races from a Feminine Standpoint," "Nellie Bly's Experience in the Salvation Army," and so on.

This is encouraging enough as far as it goes; but, after all, these cases are the exception, and it is only the exceptional woman who gets such a position. These articles, too, are naturally superficial and frothy—at least from a man's point of view; they are meant to be nothing more than so much bright gossip, telling who was there, how Mrs. So-and-So was dressed, when the audience smiled, how the speaker's cravat worked around under his left ear as he made the enthusiastic nominating speech, how tired the poor dear horse looked after he had won the Derby, and all the rest of those funny or pathetic or sentimental things that women see where men do not. Any woman who can write clever nothings of this sort will be able

sooner or later to get a position on a city paper and to draw as much pay for it as any of her brother special writers. But the only way she can convince any editor that she is the woman for such a place is to write something that is up to his standard and submit it to him at the moment when he is feeling the need of an article of the kind on the particular subject treated.

To this extent, and to a much wider extent as society reporter, woman has taken a permanent place in the local room—the dirty, dingy, tobacco-polluted local room. She has her desk there along with the other reporters and is called up by the city editor and given assignments and adjured to "rush her stuff lively," the same as any of the young men; in fact, the nearer she can come to being "one of the boys," without laying aside any of her womanliness, the greater will be her chance of success. Do not misunderstand me; I do not mean that she shall be "mannish" in her ways of acting or thinking or in her style of writing; that is exactly what she is not there for.

What I do mean is that she shall not expect any of that chivalrous homage from her fellow reporters of the male persuasion that she might have a right to look for in a parlor or a ballroom. She will make a fatal mistake if she stands on her dignity and expects the

whole force to remember that there is "a lady in the room" whenever she is about; in fact, right here lies one of the most deeply rooted objections to having a woman about a newspaper office at all. It is not an unusual thing to hear a newspaper man say that he hates women in journalism, because an editor is too busy to be eternally polite—he cannot be bothered watching his words all day long to make them fit for the ears of some Miss Nancy.

One thing is sure, if a woman wishes to make a place for herself in the newspaper office she must put up with things and men as she finds them. When she enters the local room she must not expect the reporters to put on their coats or take off their hats or remove their pipes from their mouths, any more than they would for a man. Those who are of that stripe—and alas! some of them are—will swear just as vociferously and come in half drunk once in a while just as surely as if she were not there. And yet, aside from the lack of these little extra amenities that society elsewhere accords her sex, she will be treated with all the true consideration and respect to which her character may entitle her.

I am anxious to give every reader a correct idea of the surroundings amid which a woman must work on a city newspaper, for

this is one of the cases in which a rose-tinted ideal may do a world of harm. A newspaper is a business enterprise, run, like any other business, to make money. The employes of the great "educator and uplifter," as the press delights to call itself, are no better morally than those of any other business establishment. The editorial room, therefore, is not exactly a Sunday school or a university for moral reform. If a woman wishes to push her way into this place—or, indeed, into any other new profession or trade—as she has a perfect right to if she has the qualifications with which to back up the desire—no one will say her nay. But she must not expect any favors—only a fair, even chance to have her work judged, like that of men, solely upon its power to attract readers; neither must she expect to reform the whole profession all at once, or to use the columns of the paper in which to moralize or sermonize. If she does expect it the copy reader will soon open her eyes on that point. If she is not sufficiently of the earth, earthly, to attract the worldly penny she must not expect to do her missionary work at the expense of the publisher who pays the bills.

How shall a woman go about getting a place on the staff? is a question that every newspaper writer has to answer many times. The best short answer that I know is, Write

something that the editor wants and get it into his hands before anybody else has covered it. The various ways of going about the matter are given at length in the foregoing chapter on special writing.

The special furnishes a broad but thorny road to newspaperdom that is open to all, because anybody, rich or poor, at home or in a strange land, can at least try it. It is therefore, generally speaking, the best free-for-all highway that we have. And there seem to be about as many women as men who reach distinction by it.*

A few examples will serve to show that as a rule something more than mere facility with the pen is required to attain the spectacular sort of fame that comes to the successful special writer. Nellie Bly has won her reputation by going to the bottom of New York harbor in a diver's suit, circling the globe alone in seventy-odd days, and performing similar daring tricks in the interest of the New York

*As instances taken at random may be named Marian Harland, whose articles on cooking are always in demand; Mrs. Jenness Miller, who has been able to make interesting newspaper reading on dress reform; Jennie June, whose real name is Mrs. Croly, and who is known all over the country for her syndicate fashion letters; Nellie Bly, who has indulged in numerous journalistic escapades, including a race around the world that made her famous; Fanny B. Ward, whose letters from Patagonia and various odd corners of South America have been published by a syndicate of papers east and west for the last two years, and who is a living example of the fact that women can sometimes make a success of the most difficult kind of travel correspondence.

World and her own pocketbook. Nora Marx, a young Chicago woman, laid a plan to write up the abuses that were known to exist in the Cook County Insane Asylum a few years ago, and took the hazardous method of feigning to go crazy on the street, being dumped into a patrol wagon by the police, carted off to the asylum, and going through all that a real lunatic had to suffer under the wretched management then existing in that institution. The article she wrote after her friends secured her release made her reputation. Miss Pascal, another ambitious Chicago girl, joined the harem of the religious impostor, Schweinfurth, with the express purpose of writing an expose of its workings. Her two-page article on the subject made a sensation and gained her a permanent place on the staff of the paper that contained it.

No further proof is necessary to show that women can win what the world calls success even in the most difficult and disagreeable lines of journalistic work. But it is also apparent that no woman can succeed in this rude and risky sort of business unless she love the pen better than anything else and unless she be willing to devote her whole time, energy and power to it. And even then, is not the sacrifice more than the gain? One thing is sure, if women do push their way into the thickest of the fierce struggle for ex-

istence that curses modern city journalism, they will swiftly lose many of their high ideals and sweet and tender ways, as inevitably as if they had been run through a machine for the purpose. And what is the use? There is plenty of literary work lying nearer home—the spot that women used to think dearer than fame or dollars. Treating of household work, collecting society personals, writing sketches of noted women they have met, telling tales for children or weaving bits of ideal fiction that are often truer than the realism of a sensational special—these are things that women can do with the pen, with the least loss and the greatest gain to the world.

For the woman who is determined to get a place in city journalism there is only one means that surpasses the special, and that is to secure a place on a local paper and work from that into the larger field. It is usually a comparatively easy thing, by making one's self useful free of charge for a time, to get a permanent place on a village or town paper, with at least a little pay for one's services. A little patience, and a little good work in gathering up personal items and anecdotes and handing them to the editor in good season each week, will sooner or later get you a place as regular reporter, and from that you may be able to work into an editorial position

if the paper is one of any size. You may also occupy the interval in trying your fortunes at special writing, mailing your articles to some large city daily, thus combining both methods of attacking the enemy.

When you once have a permanent position on a local paper you are almost within shouting distance of a city daily, if you are still determined to seek the higher pay and infinitely more wearing work found in that field. All the large metropolitan papers must have correspondents in each town to send them important items of news when such occur in the neighborhood, and to secure these representatives they almost invariably write to the local paper, asking the editor to recommend some one. It makes no difference to the city paper whether its representative be a man or a woman or a boy, so long as the work is done quickly and well when it is wanted. Thus, for instance, the *Tribune* and *Inter Ocean* of Chicago, which have thousands of such local correspondents all over the West, are represented in hundreds of towns by women. True, this work of reporting accidents, scandals, conventions, etc., is not quite so well adapted to a woman as to a man, because it requires a person who can rush off to all sorts of places at all sorts of times. Yet there are many women who are doing it and doing it well.

When once a correspondent becomes a trusted representative of a city daily, even in a small town where the dispatches do not amount to a column in two months, the final step toward securing a place on the office staff is chiefly a matter of excellence and push. Remember, I would not advise any woman who has a reasonably good position on a country paper to try to get into the city, for I know too well how much of the glamor that surrounds city newspaper life exists merely in the imagination of the outsider. I simply point out what I believe to be the best way to go about it if one has set one's heart upon the step. This avenue through the country newspaper office is the safest because it allows the young enthusiast a chance to taste beforehand the cup of which she proposes to drink and gives her time to draw back before it is too late. This local telegraphic correspondence and the special articles that can be written at home have the advantage of giving the beginner full scope to try her wings without danger of a very serious fall, and without risking anything more than the time spent in writing.

A young lady came to me recently and gravely asked whether she ought to give up school teaching in order to carry out her desire of becoming a writer. My answer was, most assuredly not, until she had first tried

writing as a side issue and secured satisfactory proof in hard cash that she could make a success of it. Indeed, why any woman who can get $1,000 a year for teaching school should want to take up the harder and less remunerative work of a newspaper I could never understand; but as there seem to be plenty who are aching to do it they must be dealt with.

Many writers have found to their sorrow that literature makes an excellent cane but a poor crutch. In other words, it is often convenient for "making money on the side," when it would not do to depend upon for a living A school teacher has a chance such as few others have: she can try her powers by writing during her leisure time without giving up the sure thing for the very uncertain income that is gained through the pen. After she has found a publisher or editor who will take all the articles that she can write it will be time enough to think about resigning the school teacher's desk for that of the writer. James Lane Allen, the Kentucky story writer, is an example of a teacher who worked thus in his leisure moments for years, fitting himself for the literary profession, before he finally gave up his college professorship to devote himself to the work that he loved more but which for even the best of its devotees has so little to give, especially at first.

Now let us take a look at newspaper work through a woman's eyes. A feminine journalist in New York recently delivered herself of some pithy and level-headed advice to young women who aspire to be members of the city press, in these terms:

To begin, there are, of course, a great many things that you can learn only by actual experience in a newspaper office; but there are some things that you must know before you attempt to cross the threshold.

You must know how to spell with tolerable accuracy, punctuate approximately, write a legible hand, and handle the English language with a certain degree of ease and fluency.

Now, you are going to tell me that these things are not so important as I would make them appear; that there are people employed on newspapers today who cannot do any of these things. True, indeed. But such people have great ability in other directions to offset these shortcomings. They have ideas so original and valuable that the papers which employ them can afford to pay some one else to do the writing. [Such cases certainly exist, although they are exceptional.] It would be foolish for you to try to imitate those people. It is easier to write good copy than to think original thoughts, and it is much better to be able to do a little in both lines. No one could tell you this quicker than these very people.

We will suppose, however, that you possess these qualifications. The next thing is to get an opportunity to do some work. And the getting of this opportunity will probably prove the bitterest and hardest task in all your journalistic career.

It is not an easy matter to obtain admission to an editor's office. In most cases you will be asked to set forth your designs and desires in writing before you

are allowed to set foot in the elevator. And these desires will be enough to exclude you. Editors are busy folks and have no time to waste on unknown applicants like you. Perhaps, however, you have a letter of introduction to some one in authority. This is valuable in that it gives you a hearing. It usually has no further merit whatever, as you may find out to your disappointment some day.

Let us suppose that you gain admission by some wile or other (nearly all wiles are justifiable in newspaper work, as you will soon learn). You will be asked what you have already done, and you will feel very small, indeed, when you answer that you have never done anything. Next you will be asked if you have any stories to submit or any ideas to suggest. You will learn with no small degree of astonishment that ideas which seemed very large and imposing at home diminish alarmingly when spoken of in the presence of the editor. All this and much more you will learn, and you will go home rather low in your mind. It may happen that the articles which you submitted for consideration are returned to you. It is apt to happen. But again it may happen that something is accepted, and that in time you become a space writer on the paper. Space writing is not very remunerative for women, but beginners must not expect to be salaried right away.

And now, having fairly gotten into the business, you will have many things to learn, and your only teacher will be yourself, for most newspaper people are never taught anything. They "catch on" to things somehow, or get them knocked into their heads by bitter experience.

Every paper has a certain style of writing, which you will be expected to follow. Every paper has a certain policy, political and otherwise, to which you will have to conform. To be sure, you may not always

agree with them, but your personal opinions matter little.

Punctuality and reliability are qualities which you will do well to cultivate. They will recommend you to your editor quite as effectually in the long run as mere brilliancy. There is one woman in New York who has been in newspaper work over fifteen years. It is her proudest boast that she never failed an editor or kept one waiting in all that time.

You must have determination. It is not enough to attempt a thing. You must learn to stick to it until it is accomplished: if not in the way you originally intended, then in some other way. You must be resourceful, ingenious, a whole committee of ways and means in yourself.

You must be patient. It is not a pleasant thing to wait an hour or two for an interview with a popular danseuse, or for the last sweet thing from the London variety halls, but you may have to, not once, but often. Interviewing is one of the hardest branches of the business. You are absolutely dependent upon the caprice of some other person, and even after that person has consented to receive you, you cannot be certain of obtaining what you want. All these people can be managed if only you know how to go about it. And you will do well to learn, or your editor will be wary about assigning you that work or any other.

You must be tireless. No matter if you have worked all day; you must be willing to work all night, too, if your services are needed. Editors are very shy of reporters who beg off on account of being tired.

And you must be unselfish. Good newspaper assignments usually come when they are not wanted. It is always the night that you have elected to go to the theater that a blue-coated boy runs up your front steps with a message summoning you to the office immediately. And the afternoon that you have expected to

pass on the cool veranda of some woman friend's country house may find you sitting in the squalid, stifling kitchen of a tenement house, listening to some other woman's story.

And there are other hard things which it may be your lot to bear. I know a woman who sat by the bedside of her dying sister one night—the little sister who was all she had left of kin on earth—and choked back the tears she dared not shed because there was other work for her eyes that night; who closed that sister's eyes and prepared her little white form for the coffin, and then, just as the gray dawn was creeping up over the city roofs, sat down to finish an article which must be in type that day.

Newspaper work is no play. It has its compensations, but only those who deserve receive them. And if one is not afraid of the trials of the work, is patient and faithful and tireless and everything else commendable, and yet has not a subtle quality about her writing—a suggestiveness, a dash, a certain something that makes it go—she will never be a success as a newspaper woman, and she had much better try almost anything else.

From the standpoint of the editor we get a somewhat different view of the same facts. William T. Stead, editor of the *Review of Reviews*, says the first thing he would impress upon young women who aspire to be journalists is that they must not imagine they have a right to a situation simply because they are women. If women are to get on in journalism or in anything else they must trample under foot what Mr. Stead calls that most dishonoring conception of their work as mere woman's work. One must not think that be-

cause she is a woman chivalry demands that her work be judged more leniently than if she were only a man. An editor is like a builder. He has to build his house day by day with such bricks as he can order or procure. If women supply him with only half bricks he will only pay them half wages or refuse to employ them entirely. The nether integuments of the brick maker are nothing to him, and neither is the fact that she is supporting an invalid mother and in all charity needs money. He wants bricks, good bricks, whole bricks, and he would be more likely to throw a brick at your head than to accept a half-brick merely because a woman made it.

After this, in the London editor's opinion, the next worst foe of women in journalism is their own conventionality and the fantastic notion that a lady cannot be expected to do this or that disagreeable bit of work. Women who cling to the nonsensical notion that a lady ought not to be scolded when she does wrong, or that a lady ought not to stay up late or go about the streets at night, had better stay at home in their drawing rooms and boudoirs. The great, rough, real workaday world is not the place for them. They are the kind of material a certain editor had in mind, who, when asked to place a woman on his staff, exclaimed: "A woman! never! Why, you can't use expletives to a woman!"

That settled it in his mind, and though his speech was rude it embodied the nub of an uncomfortable truth. As long as the women on a staff cannot be admonished as freely, promptly and vigorously as their male comrades they will continue to be at an unfair disadvantage.

Of course, women can do as they please. Only, if they please to do what does not fit into the existing system of the newspaper office the editor will be pleased to dispense with their services. It is not ladylike, you say, to report a police court case; it is not proper to be on the street at midnight. Well and good. If so, women need not apply for newspaper work on even terms with men. They may do odds and ends of work, they may have the fringes and the leavings, just as they have now, and be paid accordingly. As a matter of fact, women already have full possession of the work for which they are best suited—that of the household. But, if a girl is not content with this and sets out to be a reporter, she ought to be one out and out, and not try to be a reporter up to 9 o'clock and Miss Nancy after 9.

The old fogies of both sexes will say that it is impossible to preserve womanliness in newspaper work if journalism means all this. And they will be right if by the model woman they mean the clinging-vine, do-nothing-but-

look-pretty relic of feudalism that sometimes still goes by that name. But, thank heaven, the girl of the present decade is a creature with a backbone and a fairly level head on the end of it. To assert of such a woman that she cannot be ladylike if she works in an office with men till 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, is, as Mr. Stead says, simply to repeat an old and outworn fiction. He is technically correct, too, when he adds that a girl who has proper self-respect can go about her business in English-speaking countries at all hours without serious risk either to safety or to reputation; but he leaves out of his reckoning the many annoyances which a woman reporter must almost inevitably suffer, and which she should not fail to consider before pushing her way into a field for which, when all is said, she is not as well fitted as are men.

But this objection applies chiefly to the active outdoor reportorial work. In other departments the time will no doubt come, though it has not yet arrived, when women will make themselves as eligible as men for the work of journalism. The great trouble with young women as with young men is that they forget that this is a profession requiring years of training and trial and failure before it is learned. Many women seem to think that whenever they want money all they need to do is to rush off to the nearest newspaper

office and ask the editor to pay them for articles which, if they only had a little newspaper training to see it, are utterly worthless. If you must go into journalism do not object to beginning at the bottom and learning the business before expecting it to keep you.

To sum it all up, if you are willing to work like a man and yet not be mannish—if you can hold your own with any masculine writer and besides can add by your feminine charm to the scope and efficiency of the staff —you will be welcome in the newspaper office and will stand in much greater danger of being spoiled by overkindness than of being treated with surly or grudging respect.

ERRORS OF ALL SORTS.

Some philosopher has remarked that if the wise never made mistakes it would go hard with the fools. If there is anybody who is in need of charity for his errors it is the newspaper man, and he gets almost none. Mistakes will creep into the best-regulated newspaper, but woe to him through whom the offense cometh. Small errors mean a "breeze," and large ones mean a notice to quit—not to quit making errors, but to quit the office.

So, when you are on the grand jump to finish up the story of an accident that has occurred close to press time, with the city editor after you in sulphurous anxiety and the copy boy taking the stuff from you page by page as fast as you write it, it is scarcely to be wondered at if on reading the story in type after the paper is out you are horrified to find that you have written: "The dead woman rushed to the door," or, "The unfortunate man was cut in two in three places," or, "With one hand he seized the drowning girl and with the other called loudly for help." It is funny, and you smirk and smile now; but you would laugh on the other side of your

mouth if you knew how icy a managing editor can be as he calls you to his office and advises you to get a job on *Puck*—that you are too bright for his paper.

The wrong things that one can write are infinite, while the right things seem painfully finite. But so far as this multitude of possible errors can be classified they will nearly all fall under these very comprehensive heads: Incorrect spelling, punctuation or grammar; illegible or carelessly prepared copy; mixed metaphors and loose arrangement of words; wrong words and redundant terms; misstatement of fact, and wrong treatment of subjects. Let us glance briefly at each of these classes of errors. Imagine a couple of youthful literary aspirants interviewing a busy editor and a printer who happens to be in the sanctum.

"Is correct spelling worth all the trouble that it takes?" asks one tyro.

"It is an arbitary thing," adds the other. "What's the use in growing gray over a dictionary, so long as the printer can make out what you mean and set it in type according to Webster?"

"Very well said—quite original!" murmurs the editor, as, without looking up, he assigns one more ill-spelled manuscript to the wastebasket. "But you had better learn how to spell."

"Why?"

"Because straws show how the wind blows. You show me a careless speller and I will show you a careless and inaccurate thinker. The reader who never notices how a new word is spelled is not a close enough observer to make a reliable reporter."

"Yes," admits the first speaker, "a badly spelled manuscript will not have half a chance to be judged even on its merits; but you don't really mean that a person should bother punctuating every sentence, putting in all the little insignificant commas and apóstrophes and quotation marks? I always understood that the printer would attend to that."

"Another lie nailed!" cries the editor, with an energy that is quite startling; "it is I who have to toil through the manuscript and insert the omitted marks, if the copy is to go to the printer at all—which I generally take care it shall not do, unless the writer is already famous or is so unusually talented as to make the extra labor worth my while."

"Yes," chimes in the printer; "bad punctuation is worse than bad spelling. I can usually guess what you mean no matter how you spell a word; but, not being a mind reader, how can I tell what you had in your head when you wrote your sentences, if you have left out the proper dividing marks? Besides, every moment that I spend in puzzling out

blind copy is so much stolen by the writer out of the wages I get that day."

"That's it!" exclaims the editor, frowning upon the now penitent theorist; "take, for instance, that trite subject for an after-dinner speech: 'Woman—without her, man would be a savage.' Those words may be profoundly true whether there be a dash after the first word or not, but the punctuation certainly has a vital bearing upon the thought expressed."

"In the first ages of printing there were only three marks of punctuation," says the printer, "the comma, frequently made as an upright stroke, the colon and the period. Later—"

"How I should like to hang the man who invented all the rest!" interrupts the ambitious but easy-going youth who has gone through college yet who punctuates altogether with dashes.

"Later," continues the printer, without deigning to notice the interruption, "the semicolon, exclamation and interrogation marks were added. Quotation marks, the bane of the compositor and the most frequent cause of typographical errors, are a recent invention. Dashes, parentheses and brackets existed before type but came into printing long after it was an established art."

"But how is one to know when to use each of these?"

"Custom has determined the chief use of each. The comma indicates the point where an explanatory sentence is begun or ended; the semicolon marks the separation of two incomplete or interdependent sentences; the colon stands where the preceding sentence or part of a sentence ends with expectancy that is to be satisfied with what immediately follows; the period or full-point indicates that the sentence is closed; the parentheses that one clause of a sentence, usually explanatory, is within another sentence; the bracket that what is enclosed is interpolated, usually by some person other than the writer of the original discourse, and the dash that one idea is suddenly broken into by another idea. The exclamation and interrogation marks explain themselves."

"There," and the editor nods approvingly, "you have in a nutshell the theory of points; but let me add a point or two. The perplexing question of where to use the comma will be almost solved when once you realize that commas, in the majority of cases, go in pairs—though the necessary substitution of a period often obscures the fact—and that parentheses could be substituted for them. The meaning of the parenthesis has not changed since the sixteenth century, when it was often used for the comma. The custom has shortened the mark and broadened its scope of usefulness;

that is all. A pair of dashes are often substituted nowadays for the original parentheses or 'finger-nails,' as the printers call them."

For the employment of the much-abused quotation marks the editor gave these rules:

"Use the ordinary double marks to enclose the alternating speeches of a dialogue, and all utterancess repeated verbatim by a second person. Where a quotation occurs within a quotation, use the 'single' marks to designate it. If you should ever have a quotation at the third remove, 'inside of these "single" marks,' use double ones again. Where one speaker keeps on through more than one paragraph, put the double marks at the beginning of each paragraph, but not at the end of any but the last. On the other hand, for the love of piety, avoid that common lapse of the literary slattern—beginning a quotation and not marking its end."

"And grammar—is that worth all the fuss that the school teachers make over it?"

"Why, all that punctuation is for is to make clear to the eye the grammar of the printed sentences. How can you make clear by marks a thing that you do not yourself understand? You must be able to see all the hidden relations of your words to each other just as the skilled mechanic can see the working of all the hidden parts of an engine. If

you aspire to fit together the wheels and shafts and pinions of discourse you must not be too lazy to learn the rudiments of the profession, or you will not be very likely to turn out anything that will 'go.' Of course, if you associate all your life with those who invariably use correct grammar you may learn the right use of words unconsciously; but even that is superficial if it is not reinforced with a knowledge of the whys and wherefores. Certainly, learn grammar. Learn everything you can about the tools with which you intend to work all your life.

"Even the best-educated writer is prone enough to be puzzled and to make slips. But there are certain flagrant and oft-repeated errors made by the careless beginner that are a weariness to the flesh and to the patience of the editor who has to reconstruct the manuscript which the incompetent tyro prides himself on having 'thrown off' at a high rate of speed."

"For instance?" queries the inquirer, feeling after his notebook.

"One of the most annoying errors with which the newspaper editor has to contend is the reporter's and country correspondent's careless use of pronouns referring to collective nouns. Words like mob, army, orchestra, society, family, can be used with either a singular or a plural verb, and must have singu-

lar or plural pronouns referring to them accordingly. The careless writer, who thinks he knows it all without studying grammar or rhetoric, will often start out with the singular and switch off to the plural. For instance, it is exasperating to the copy reader when a reporter writes: 'The society has decided to hold a special meeting, and they will assemble,' and so on, to the end of a long sentence. And if the error inadvertently slips through the copy reader's hands it makes trouble for the proof-reader and type-setter as well as for the editor. The rule is, Use the pronoun and verb in the singular if the idea of unity is to be conveyed, and in the plural if the idea of plurality is to be conveyed. Thus, 'The mob comes on in one compact body and hurls itself against the gates;' or, 'The mob now scatter in every direction and yell as they move off.' Whatever you do, don't mix the two styles in the same paragraph.

"Careless use of personal pronouns is equally inexcusable. If you must refer to the weakness of a Jack Tar, do not give your editor a needless shock by announcing that you 'saw a sailor talking to the Rev. Philander Doesticks who was so drunk he could hardly stand.' Never use a relative or personal pronoun without considering to what noun it will relate when the whole sentence is read. It is always better to repeat a name

than to use a pronoun that will leave any doubt about its antecedent."

"But," interrups the humble aspirant for literary honors, "how will I learn all these fine points?"

"I do not know how you *will* learn to speak and write correctly," replies the editor, frowning and moving impatiently in the direction of his unfinished work, "but if you mean to ask how you *shall* learn, I recommend that you read a good authority on grammar and another on rhetoric, and that you study the style of writers like George William Curtis and Matthew Arnold. One of the things that you will learn from such a course is that 'I shall, you will, he will,' are the forms of the future tense and merely foretell what is expected to take place. 'I will, you shall, he shall,' express determination on the part of the speaker; they indicate that he means business—that this thing must take place, whether it wants to or not. Learn the English language at least well enough to ask intelligibly for help; otherwise you may meet the fate of the famous man who fell into the Thames and went down screaming, 'I will drown and nobody shall help me.'"

The youth quails before the stern gaze of his critic and murmurs, "I intend to earnestly try."

"An intolerable newspaperism! The act-

ive infinitive should be used as one word. No matter how many newspapers flagrantly violate this rule of universal language, don't do it. Don't say, 'To earnestly try,' or 'To strenuously resist,' and so forth, instead of 'to try earnestly,' or 'strenuously to resist.' The adverb must stand as near as possible to the term which it limits, but there is no need to split the part of speech and insert the modifying word between the mangled fragments."

"What, Mr. Editor, is the first and chief error against which you would warn the beginner?"

"The error of entering journalism or of writing at all for a living. But I am aware that this advice is about as useful as telling a young man or woman with whom to fall in love. So, waiving that point, I should say that the most important thing to avoid was illegible or slovenly copy; no need to say why.

"Careless penmanship and spelling are not the only faults that make what I call slovenly manuscript. Errors of arrangement, mixed metaphors, and all the other kindred abominations that are the result of carelessness rather than of ignorance, come under that head. There is no plea that can palliate the sin of the verbal paretic who writes: 'He blew out his brains after bidding his wife good-by with a gun,' or 'Six hundred and

seventy eight persons have been injured, fourteen fatally, by the official report of the World's Fair authorities.'"

The editor looks so fierce as he says this that nobody dares to smile. The printer finally breaks the awkward pause by suggesting that he is reminded of the Manchester *Union's* famous headline over an account of Sunday services: "Sinful Pleasures—The First of a Series by the Rev. C. W. Heizer," and of the old tombstone in his town with the touching inscription on it: "Erected to the memory of John Phillips accidentally shot as a mark of affection by his brother."

The editor smiles grimly and continues his harangue:

"Metaphors, my young friends, are among the best servants of the writer as long as he treats them with Christian kindness. But the bon vivant has rightly said that there are many good things which it is not safe to mix. Take your metaphors straight, young men, or not at all. Don't refer to your rival's scurrilous attack as a mere fleabite in the ocean. Don't say anything about seeing the footprints of an almighty hand beaming athwart the ocean of eternity. Forbear to electrify your audience, as a Berlin revolutionist did, by declaring that the chariot of anarchy is rolling onward and gnashing its teeth as it rolls. If you will insist on writ-

ing, as a Boston editor did, about being 'blinded by the noise of brass bands,' you must not expect that the 'fragrance of your memory will go thundering down the dim vista of the years.' For it won't.

"For proficiency in the use of wrong words I commend you to Mrs. Partington and the bombastical pest who announces that 'reliable parties have inaugurated operations for the erection of an edifice of worship,' when he means to say that 'trustworthy persons have begun building a church.' A long word where a short one would express the same meaning is almost as bad as a word of totally wrong meaning. Redundant words are a degree worse than long words. Any word that can be dropped out without altering or obscuring the meaning of the sentence is an error. Next to the ability to see, and to tell what you have seen, the power to condense is worth most in newspaper work. The best writer is he who can convey the most ideas in the fewest syllables.

"There is only one verbal error that is worse than those I have mentioned, and that is absolute misstatement. This is the bane of the newspaper. The constant recurrence of errors of fact shakes the confidence of the reader in everything that appears in print. These misstatements may be willful lies, or 'fakes,' as we call them, on the part of both

reporter and editor; or they may be concocted by the reporter and published by the editor in good faith—a case not likely to occur a second time with the same reporter; or they may be the result of unintentional error from the beginning. Nine-tenths of the misstatements made by newspapers are the fault of the persons giving the information.

"With the lying sheet we have nothing to do; a paper that makes a business of 'faking' is as easily found out and avoided as the man who can not or will not tell the truth. The occasional publication of misinformation, however, is a harder matter to guard against. The editor has no time to confirm every dispatch or story that comes to him; neither has the correspondent or reporter. But the wrong is done when the substance of floating rumors is dogmatically written down as fact. If a correspondent would honestly say in every such case, 'This story is told by so-and-so, and I have had no time to confirm it,' the editor could then take it for what it was worth and act accordingly, and the readers would have more faith in the paper. The best way to avoid errors of fact is to get your story, if possible, from two or three different sources and draw a mean from their extremes."

"But how is it possible," asks one of the listeners, "for a paper to report a sermon, as

a New York journal did last week, without getting a single, solitary statement correct?''

''That is plain enough; it was a 'fake' by some reporter who was 'soldiering'—that is, he made it up out of his own head, without going near the church or the preacher. Probably he overslept after a Saturday night's carousal and did not wake until after the sermon was delivered. He had to cover the assignment, so he naturally and coolly sat down in the privacy of his own room and covered it.

''If people knew how often that sort of thing was done—yes, even in their pet, infallible paper—they would lose all faith in the press, and that would be worse than putting implicit faith in it. But most of the inaccuracies come through trying to cover events that there is no time to cover. What is really needed is a little more honesty and a little less enterprise—an improvement to be secured by the news-greedy public only through better patronage for those papers that steadfastly refuse to throw accuracy and truth to the winds in their wild rush to be first to tell a new story.

''You spoke of the use of words with the wrong meaning, Mr. Editor; how can a person be sure he is using the right word?''

''The dictionary must be your bible, and good writers must be your constant preachers.

These will give you a sort of literary conscience that will tell you which is the best word for each place. If you intend to be a writer the words of the English language are to be your tools all your life, and the sooner you learn the proper use of them in all their delicate shades of meaning the sooner you will be likely to produce something that is worth reading. As new words are being coined every day, the study of words is a branch in which you will not graduate in anything less than a lifetime. The subject of misused words would fill volumes itself.*

"Study the original meanings of words, and then you can laugh at the frequent and glaring advertisements that other writers are constantly making of their ignorance. You will not, for instance, abuse that handy little word née, French for born, by speaking of 'Mrs. Smith, née Betty Jones.' However talented Mrs. Smith may be, and however precocious she may have been as a child, she was born a Jones and not Betty Jones. You will not say 'try and,' when you mean 'try to,' or 'but what,' when you mean simply 'but.' The writer who stops to think never commits to black and white that frequent

*"Writing for the Press," a book of about 100 pages, written by Robert Luce and published by the Writer Publishing Co., Boston, contains a useful list of common errors of this sort to be avoided, besides valuable hints on other newspaper topics. I think booksellers charge $1 for it.

conversational error of don't used for doesn't; 'he don't' is intolerable to sensitive literary consciences. But if you want to give the world indubitable proof that you are a limb of backwoods journalism just write about somebody who has 'suicided.' It will give you away much more completely than if you went about calling yourself a 'journalist' instead of a modest newspaper man or woman.

"Wrong treatment of a subject? Oh, that is a matter of style and policy and is a topic for the study of editors and copy readers rather than of beginners."

"Do you think that book learning is worth all the time it takes, for one preparing to be a reporter?"

"You would say so if you were a lecturer and quoted Tennyson's

> 'Better fifty years of Europe
> Than a cycle of Cathay.'

and then saw it printed, 'Better fifty years of Europe than a circus at Bombay,' or if you exclaimed 'Behold the martyr in a sheet of fire,' and the intelligent reporter echoed, 'Behold the martyr with his shirt on fire.' By all means get a liberal education—the more liberal the better. I devoutly wish all compositors could take the same advice," adds the editor, looking askance at the printer. "Imagine the feelings of the learned professor who wrote an article on 'Ancient Methods of

Filtration,' and found it in print with the heading, 'Ancient Methods of Flirtation,' or of the poet who wrote, 'He kissed her under the silent stars,' when it was translated by the matter-of-fact compositor into 'He kicked her under the cellar stairs.' "

"Don't blame the printer," interrupts the representative of that craft, with some warmth; "score the proof-reader; he is the man that is paid to find mistakes."

"It is true," says the editor, smiling reminiscently, "that the reporter and editor suffer for many of the errors that ought to lie at the proof-reader's door. During my collegiate course it was my lot to be editor-in-chief of the college paper. In giving an account of a faculty entertainment one of my reporters wrote, 'Professor Parsons rendered the Sicilian Hymn.' The typo had set it up, 'Professor Parsons murdered the Sicilian hymn.' I caught the error in reading the final 'revise,' but, as Professor Parsons was not much of a singer and rather unpopular withal, I thought it would be a sin to spoil so good a joke; so I let the error slide. When the paper came out the Professor was wild; he suspected me, and never had much use for me after that—except at the end of the term, when he got even by conditioning me in physics."

"I once knew an editor," says one of the

visitors, emboldened by the general laugh, "who wrote a profound discussion of the political situation and headed it, 'Let Us Explore.' He neglected to read the proof and it appeared in the paper, 'Let Us Explode'—which he immediately did—with wrath. The proof-reader's head was blown off."

"Served the villain right!" ejaculates the printer with a chuckle of pleasure at the thought of a proof-reader actually coming to grief.

"The Rev. Joseph Cook," continues the editor, "once asked a Boston audience, 'Was St. Paul a dupe?' In the report he was made to propound the startling conundrum, 'Was St. Paul a dude?' Miss Frances E. Willard once said of this same Joseph that of certain evils he was the uncompromising foe. The types rechristened him the 'uncompromising Joe,' which is not so far from the fact as it might have been. Of a friend who had died Miss Willard wrote, 'Some of us are like comets; she was a steady-shining star.' In print she was made to say, 'Some of us are like camels.' Her statement, 'It's only strength makes gentleness sublime,' was made to read, 'It's only strength makes gentlemen sublime.' "

Then one of the questioners asks how to become a proof-reader.

"Anybody can learn the necessary marks

from the sample page in the back of Webster's unabridged dictionary," is the answer; "but the securing of a position as proof-reader is the same as the securing of a clerkship in a drygoods store; it is largely a matter of personal acquaintance and of good fortune in finding a vacancy. Most of our proof-readers are drawn from the ranks of the printers, and an outsider usually has to work in by means of personal friendship with the proprietor of some large job office. Proofs of book and job work are usually not read in such a rush as attends daily paper work, and there is a better chance in such an establishment for a beginner.

"But, a truce to this lecturing," concludes the editor, turning to his work. "Here is something that I would advise you to study religiously if you intend to write for newspapers. It is the sheet of instructions that the Chicago *Tribune* gives to every reporter who is admitted to its staff."

On the slip is printed the following:

In giving dates abbreviate name of month when followed by the day of the month. Do not say "the 25th of December," but Dec. 25.

You receive your salary (if you are in luck) Monday, not "on" Monday. You are discharged (if you are not in luck) Jan. 1, not "on January 1st."

In referring to a minister use "the Rev. Mr. So-and-So," not "Rev. So-and-So."

Numerals—In giving ages of persons or dimensions

of buildings, etc., use figures; in giving sums of money use figures for all amounts over nine cents; in other cases spell out all under 100. Do not write a number in figures and then "ring" it unless you are sure that you are right. It is easier for a copy reader to "ring" a number to "spell out" than it is to cross out a ring. The same rule applies to abbreviations.

Do not begin an item with "Yesterday." The event is more important than the date.

Except occasionally in reports of society events John Jones is plain John Jones, not "Mr." John Jones. The same rule applies to the Smiths and others.

The use of the word "about" should be avoided where possible. If you write, "There were 2,000 people in the hall," the round numbers are a sufficient indication that there was not an actual count of those present.

In referring to locations it is sufficient to say "State and Madison streets," not "at the corner of State and Madison streets." "Corner" is allowable if you are giving the location exactly, as "northwest corner of State and Madison streets."

"Lady" is a much misused word. "Woman" is preferable in all cases except where it appears in the name of an organization, as in "Board of Lady Managers." The mistress of a defaulter was recently referred to as a "beautiful lady "

Never begin a paragraph at the bottom of a page. It necessitates the rewriting of a part of the paragraph by a copy reader. Never divide a word on the last line of a page, and never divide a name on the last line of a page. The full name should be on one page.

Never use the word "deceased." And in obituary notices do not refer to "the dead man." The latter is allowable in police news, however.

If a man be "well known," it is not necessary to say so.

If a quotation is to have paragraphs in it, paragraph the beginning of it. It should be "run in" after a colon only when all that is included between the quotation marks is to be one paragraph, and not always then.

It is the unexpected that "occurs." Weddings do notbelong to this class.

These words are not to be used: "Deceased," "ovation," "past" where "last" can be used, and "balance" where it means "remainder."

In giving the text of a sermon, observe the following style: "John iv., 6. Luke vii., 7."

Don't use "Sabbath" where "Sunday" will do.

Don't use "gentleman" when you can avoid doing so.

Every inanimate object, as a boat, an engine, etc., is "it," and not "she." A ship loses "its," not "her" mast The same rule applies to the use of pronouns in referring to cities, states, countries, etc.

Time is of the greatest importance. Get your copy into the office at the earliest possible moment. Nothing counts against a man more than dilatoriness.

In preparing lists of names in society reports, group as follows: "Mr. and Mrs. John Bink," "Mr. and Mrs. Henry Bultitude," and so on. Then in a separate paragraph write: "Mrs. Susan Noodles, Mrs. William Skillings," etc. Then in another paragraph, "Misses Ellen Flannigan, Maggie McGinty," etc. Then give the names of the gentlemen present, thus: "Patrick O'Brien, Hans Deutscher, John Johnson," etc.

In accidents where a list of the killed or injured, or both, is given, run each name with the injury, etc., in a separate paragraph, after a short introduction to the list, and always give the surname first, in alphebetical order. Separate the list of the fatalities from that of the injured. Example:

The names of those killed are given below:

FRIES, JACOB, engineer, Ottawa, Ill.

MURRAY, JOHN L., fireman, Peru, Ill.

The names of the injured follow:

DENHART, JACOB, St. Louis, right leg crushed.

FITZPATRICK, BARNEY, Moline, Ill., spine bruised; internal injuries.

HERMAN, JACOB, Chicago, severely bruised and right arm broken.

JOHNSON, WILLIAM, Macomb, Ill., fractured skull and internal injuries; will die.

Don't try to write a column on one page of copy paper. Leave an inch at the top and bottom of each page and a margin on the left-hand side of three-quarters of an inch. Leave at least one-eighth of an inch between the lines.

Don't be careless about proper names. Be sure you have them right and then go ahead plainly. If the name is at all unusual, go back to your school-boy days and "print" it.

Don't neglect, when time permits, to read your copy before handing it in. And don't forget to look at it in print.

Don't forget to folio your pages.

Don't mix your tenses. In quoting a speaker use present tense with quotation marks; in giving a "third person" report use the past tense without quotation marks.

Don't say "the above;" if necessary, use "the foregoing."

Don't use "party" for man, woman or person. In court matter "party" is allowable.

Don't forget that one "stick" is 160 words, and that one column is 1,440 words, unless otherwise specified.

Don't confound "amateur" with "novice." An amateur may be the equal of the professional in experience and skill; a novice is a beginner.

Don't use "audience" for anything but an assembly of hearers. Spectators are present at a pantomime or a prize fight.

Don't try to divide an apple "between" more than two friends; you may divide it "among" as many as you choose.

Don't say "the marriage was consummated," if you mean that "the ceremony was performed."

Don't say "don't" when you mean "doesn't."

Don't announce that Mrs. Smith will give a luncheon "during" the week, unless she intends to feed guests for the next seven days.

Don't say "gents'" furnishing store. "Gents" wear "pants" and eat "lunches" and "open" wine.

Don't say "Miss Huntington was given a dinner," or that a dinner was given "in honor of Miss Huntington." Say, "A dinner was given to (or for) Miss Huntington"

Don't say "per day," or "per year," but "a day," or "per diem," and "a year," or "per annum"

Don't say "section" for "region." A section is a definite division of space.

Don't fail to discriminate between "state" and "say." To state means to make known specifically or to explain particularly.

Don't use "suicide" as a verb. A man no more "suicides" than he "arsons" or "mayhems."

Don't "try and" write correctly, but "try to" write correctly.

Don't use "ult.," "inst.," or "prox.," when you can avoid it. Say last month, this month, and next month.

Don't forget that "death is the wages of sin," and that "the wages of sin are death;" in other words, verbs agree in number with their subjects and not with their predicates.

Don't use long and involved sentences. Three short ones are better than one long one

Don't use "some" for "several;" e. g., "some years ago."

Don't say "since" when you mean ago:" e. g., "some time since" (ago).

Don't say "propose" for "purpose;" the one means to make an offer, the other to intend.

Don't say "the funeral of the *late* Mr. Frankenstein;" it is to be presumed that the man is dead.

Don't spell forward, backward, homeward, afterward, downward, toward, earthward and heavenward with a final "s."

Don't say "the three first," or "the three second;" instead, say, "the first three," and "the second three."

Don't forget that "either—or" and "neither—nor" take the singular verb.

Don't say, "differ with" a man, unless you wish to say that one man differs with another man from a third man.

Don't say, "she looks prettily," unless you mean to describe her manner of gazing. Verbs of doing take the adverb, of seeming and being, the adjective; e. g., "she walks slowly," "she limps painfully," "her face feels rough."

Don't forget the importance of writing legibly. By writing illegibly you cause annoyance to everyone from editor to proof-reader, and do yourself an injury.

Don't use "as though" for "as if." You can say, "he walks as (he would walk) if he were lame," but not, "he walks as (he would walk) though he were lame."

MAGAZINES AND NOVELS.

What is the difference between a magazine article and a newspaper story? At first sight they are apparently much the same, but a closer inspection will show that they are as different as the two periodicals themselves. One is polished, permanent, and has something of the air and dignity of a book about it; the other is light, careless, ephemeral, intended to entertain or instruct for a day and then sink into oblivion. Indeed, when we come to examine the details in the production of each, the two are seen to be not only widely different but growing farther apart every day.

The domineering, all-pervasive success of the daily paper is due to the marvelous printing presses that have come with the last decade and that can turn out with ease 30,000 complete copies an hour, and, if the paper is small, double that number. The growing appreciation with which the magazines are received is due, in a measure, to the very reverse of this, for the slow presses which print the finest illustrations do not average more than 600 impressions an hour.

As with the presses, so with the other points of difference. With one it is rush and fill; with the other it is weigh and eliminate. The newspaper consuming its thousands of articles must be rapidly edited; the magazine keeps from six to ten editors engaged an entire month in sifting, selecting, editing and arranging for illustration the eighteen or twenty articles that appear in one number. From the 8,000 or 10,000 manuscripts a year that pour into the cases of the editors, only about 200 finally reach a place in the magazine. Almost every large magazine has enough accepted manuscript constantly on hand to last several years. The newspaper reader glories in the vast quantity of pabulum that he gets for two cents; the magazine reader is in search of quality more than of quantity, and is willing to have the tons of manuscript sifted at his expense and to have only the very best laid before him.

And even if the choicest magazine material be offered to a daily or weekly newspaper, neither of these, with its numerous issues, can afford to pay the prices that a prosperous magazine can well give. Yet the prices paid for magazine articles are comparatively small when taken on the average, because of the multitude of contributors and the anxiety of writers to get their names into magazines, whatever the pay. A new writer would often

rather sell his manuscript to a magazine for less than to a newspaper, because he naturally prefers that his reputation should extend over a continent rather than over a county, and that his words should be put into a comparatively permanent form rather than into a flying sheet that is to be buried beneath a new generation of its kind before its birthday sun has set. Of these facts magazine publishers, like other business men, take more or less advantage at the expense of the unknown writer. Those who are famous can of course command almost any price for their work.*

Illustration has come to be almost as important a branch of magazine work as the letter-press itself. The artist, if he can do the work at all, gets rather better pay than the writer, because there are not so many of him. Not all kinds of articles will admit of illustration, but as a rule anything of a descriptive nature, whether for a newspaper or a magazine, will stand a better chance of acceptance if it be accompanied with sketches or photographs—preferably the latter, unless you are an expert and understand the special

*John Brisbin Walker, publisher of the *Cosmopolitan*, recently claimed to have paid $300 for a single-page poem and $450 for only three illustrations. The average price for small poems in the prominent magazines of the country might be placed perhaps at $15, and that of first-class prose articles at from $50 to $75. During the brief period in which W. D. Howells was editor of the *Cosmopolitan* he was paid at the rate of $15,000 a year.

needs of the business. An unmounted photograph is better than one that has been mounted. Drawings or unmounted prints must never be folded and should be mailed with cardboard on each side of them.

While we are on the subject, it may be well to touch upon a few points that should be kept in mind by those intending to draw for newspaper illustration. The essentials for this work are talent, perfectly black ink, and perfectly white paper. The drawing should be at least one-third larger than the illustration is to be in the paper or magazine, for in transferring it to metal it is desirable to reduce it. Allowance must be made for this reduction in the shading; too much is worse than none at all.

As invention has followed invention, and especially since the introduction of delicate half-tone illustrations in magazine work, the printing of the magazine and the printing of the newspaper have grown to be entirely separate branches of the art. The inventor has improved the magazine press in rollers and in impression, but not yet in speed. The speed in this work was greater forty years ago than it is now—and a glance at an old periodical will indicate why.

Magazine articles may be divided broadly into those of fact and those of fiction. Descriptive, biographical, argumentative or

other articles dealing with facts or opinions are not essentially different from the newspaper special article in form and general plan of treatment; only, they are worked out more carefully and elaborately and do not necessarily deal with present-day subjects. On these, therefore, little more help can be given in these pages. With the writing of fiction we shall deal a little more at length.

Newspaper work presents the easiest point of access for the literary beginner, but fiction writing, if so be one have the talent, is the surer avenue to pecuniary success. Not that it is always a gold mine, even for a good writer after he or she has made a reputation; but it often is quite remunerative, and is more so, at any rate, than that of any other class of writers, unless we except the few successful dramatists of the day.

Short stories are the rage just at present, and any writer who can strike a popular chord in that line will have more than he or she can do to fill the orders that will come unsolicited. The fact that not one in a hundred ever strikes this popular chord does not alter the fact. This, moreover, seems to be the legitimate and the straightest road to success as a novelist, though a good short-story writer is not necessarily a good novel writer. Nevertheless, the short story and the long novel are essentially the same and require similar materials and similar treatment.

"If you are going to be a story writer," says James Lane Allen, "take American subjects and confine yourself to a particular locality; there is a craze for short stories nowadays, and the more thoroughly American you can make them the more likely they will be to find favor with publishers."

Mr. Allen, it may be remarked, has confined himself entirely to Kentucky stories. As he is, unlike most writers, a man who has analyzed his literary processes, it may not be amiss to reproduce here a portion of an interesting conversation that I recently had with him on the subject of magazine fiction. "What do you mean by an author's confining himself to a particular locality?" I asked.

"I mean that the prevailing type of story depicts local life—life as it is in New England, for instance, or in Georgia or Kentucky. Almost every successful writer is working in some definite locality. Cable, you know, is devoting himself to Louisiana; Harris is at work in Georgia, Miss Murfree in Tennessee, Elizabeth Stuart Phelphs and Sarah Orne Jewett in New England, Richard Harding Davis in New York City, and so on to the end of the list—with exceptions, of course. And all these local literatures, put together, are making for our country a national literature—something that it never had before.

"Yes," continued the Kentuckian, "choose

a particular community, and out of its life glean its peculiar types of character, its historical romance, its scenes and sayings, and work them into your plot with such art that the reader must recognize the portrait if he ever saw the original. Take the most important topic that you can find in your community, and clothe it in the imagery that is peculiar to the place. It is the local color that we want. The story must *belong* somewhere.

"With all this, however, your picture must be true to human nature; it must be universal, yet peculiar, characteristic. You have the old and the perpetually new, combined; the same old heart, the same old passions, the same old loves and yearnings and regrets, yet in a new and peculiar setting.

"Don't forget that you are after beauty—as much of it as you can possibly get. Study art. Study the masters of the short story and of the novel; these are your only teachers."

After remarking with wonder upon the fact that there was no master's studio to which a literary apprentice could go to learn his art, he expressed the opinion that the time would come when all the chief colleges would have chairs endowed for the instruction of writers of every kind Then I asked what he thought should be the chief aim of a writer of fiction.

"The delineation of character," was his reply. "There must be something in every story that is significant—that helps; but the chief power of the writer lies in character drawing. Around that centers the highest interest of the reader. There is, of course, the interest of plot—that is curiosity; and there are humor, pathos, instruction, and the various other sources of interest; but the novelist has always before him that chief end—to depict character and the effects of one character upon another."

"Then he must study people?"

"Always and everywhere. The average man does not do this; but when one becomes a writer one soon learns it, and one's insight into character becomes almost supernaturally keen."

"Should a writer study out his whole plot before he begins to write?"

"Yes; the first thing is to know exactly what you want to do with your subject. You must see the end of your story from the beginning. You must sit within your subject as within a room. As your story-people take shape in your thought, you make their acquaintance by degrees, and learn to live in them, to feel with them, and finally to speak for them. Then writing becomes a necessity —a duty—the most terrible of duties; and, almost unconsciously, you work your own conceptions of duty into your characters."

"Do you think that newspaper writing is good training for the novelist's work?"

"No; I believe it will ultimately spoil a good novelist. At least I have had friends tell me that they had been permanently injured by their newspaper training."

"How so?"

"One reason is that the reporter must always be straining after speed and quantity rather than after perfection of form and dramatic habits of thought. But the main objection to journalism as a preliminary training for fiction writing is that the newspaper rigidly cuts out all romantic sentiment. Now, all true literature is bathed in sentiment. The author tells not only what he sees and thinks, but also how he feels toward his characters, whose imaginary words he reports. He weaves his own emotions into his story. This is the very thing that the reporter is forbidden to do, and long training under the remorseless blue pencil stamps out of a man or woman the very faculty that is most precious to the story writer."

The enthusiasm of the artist kindled in the speaker's eyes as the conversation turned to the subject of color in descriptive writing, and he confidentially gave this bit of his own experience:

"A friend of mine—a painter—had just finished reading some little thing that I had

succeeded in having published in the *Century*.

"'What do you think of it?' I asked him. 'Tell me frankly what you like and what you don't like.'

"'It's interestingly told, dramatic, polished, and all that, Allen,' was his reply; 'but, why in the world did you neglect such an opportunity to drop in some color here, and at this point, and there?'

"It came over me like that," said the Kentuckian, snapping his fingers with a graceful wave of the hand, "that words indicating colors can be manipulated by the writer just as pigments are by the painter. I never forgot the lesson. And now, when I describe a landscape or a house or a costume, I try to put it into such words that an artist can paint the scene from my words.

"This art of landscape painting in fiction is a comparatively new thing," added Mr. Allen; "the earlier novelists had not learned it."

"The dialect story—"

"Is dead. The negro dialect story, especially, seems to be a thing of the past. The best story of this sort would be likely to go begging for a publisher. The mountaineer dialect seems to be about to share the same fate. This change may be only a passing whim of fashion, but there is, at any rate, no ignoring it."

As the conversation drifted upon methods of work, Mr. Allen remarked that he usually confined his working day to four hours of each forenoon.

"Isn't that rather a short day?" I asked.

"Four hours with the pen I call a long, hard day's work—all that a man can stand the year round and not lose his health."

"How do you spend your afternoons?"

"In reading, or in talking with some one who has a bit of information that I need, or in visiting some spot that has a story in it; in short, my afternoons are usually spent in collecting materials. Besides, a writer must keep abreast of the whole movement of literature; and he must study the particular magazine to which he wishes to contribute, in order to know its spirit—its standard. Study the magazine—that is one of the first elements of a contributor's success."

"What have you found to be the chief reasons for which editors reject stories?"

"The first or rather the surface cause for which the beginner is likely to have his story returned as 'not available' is careless mechanical preparation of the manuscript."

"Do you refer to illegible writing?"

"Yes; and to imperfect punctuation and careless spelling and neglect to leave the proper margins; young writers are prone to crowd their lines too close together, or to

write on big foolscap sheets, or to roll their copy, or to divulge greenness by some other bit of carelessness. When an editor gets such a manuscript he says to himself, 'That is the work of a novice; I have no time to waste on it now,' and it is thrown aside for something that promises better."

"But, suppose the manuscript is typewritten and correct in every detail?"

"Then the editor's objection may be based on the weakness and insufficiency of the material used in the story. Or the execution and the material may be all right, and the art of the author—that highest of all requirements—may be at fault.

"Again," continued Mr. Allen, "these three qualifications may all be there, and yet the story may be clothed in a style that is out of fashion, as dialect talk would be just now. The tale, too, may pass muster on all these points and yet not be suited to a particular magazine because it would be antagonistic to a certain class of readers.

"Lastly, a story may be perfect of its kind and may be entirely suited to the magazine and to the tastes of the editor, and yet, at the particular time when it is submitted, it may not fit into the plans of the managers.

"When you send a manuscript to a magazine you will sooner or later receive one of four answers: First, and least desirable, an

engraved note rejecting the story without any why or wherefore; second, a personal letter declining it and telling the reason; third, a letter suggesting certain modifications in the story and intimating that it may be acceptable with these changes; fourth, a check."

"What do you think is the most trying time in the career of a young author?"

"The period of suspense after he has signed his manuscript and sent it off to the editor; then begins the anxiety and the waiting; he begins to think of so many places where he could improve that story if only he had the copy back; he waits and hopes and fears until he is sick—and when the editor's answer does come it is not likely to cure him.

"Whatever you do," added Mr. Allen, dropping into a tone of advice, "don't make a fuss; keep perfectly quiet. Don't write the editor a long letter when you send your story; he doesn't want your criticisms on it. And don't get impatient and write asking why he doesn't publish it, or whether he received it, or what he thinks of it. You may rest assured of one thing: the editor is every whit as anxious to get a good story as you are to give it; so, whether he has ever heard your name before or not, he will at least read enough of your manuscript to convince him that it does not contain what he is seeking."

Here, then, is an author who regards story

writing in the light of an art. But, even if fiction be an art, the rules of which are teachable, it by no means follows that success can be secured without the inborn genius which every true novelist possesses. The story teller must have the gift of observation; he must acquire the art of description; he must exercise suppression and selection; his characters must be drawn clearly; he must strive without ceasing to attain a pure style. William T. Stead says that no reputation worth having can be made without attending to style, and that there is no style, however rugged, which cannot be made beautiful by attention and pains.

In this connection it is interesting to note Robert Louis Stevenson's view of the subject. He declares that the secret of success in literature is elbow grease. "I can always tell," he says, "when an author does not write over and over again. If a man has every word and every sentence and every subject in the right order, and has no other gift, he will be a great writer." The valuation which Mr. Stevenson sets upon industry and concentration is perhaps not too high, but it is idle to deny that these must be joined to another quality which he modestly neglects to mention—the quality vaguely and variously termed aptitude, talent, genius. It would be absurd, for instance, to say that Macaulay

owed his literary eminence solely to the fact that he wrote "over and over again." Labor is the superstructure of success, but it must rest on the right foundation or it will be in vain. "Know thyself" should precede "Labor conquers all things."

These rules, drawn up and published by Walter Besant a few years ago, are worthy the attention of every one who aspires to this field of labor to which so many imagine themselves called and where so few are actually chosen:

Practice writing something original every day.
Cultivate the habit of observation.
Work regularly at certain hours.
Read no rubbish.
Aim at the formation of style.
Endeavor to be dramatic.
A great element of dramatic skill is selection.
Avoid the sin of writing about a character.
Never attempt to describe any kind of life except that with which you are familiar.
Learn as much as you can about men and women.
For the sake of forming a good natural style, and acquiring a command of language, write poetry.

"As regards style," Mr. Besant once wrote to a literary aspirant—a lawyer's clerk in a little country town—"it will be a long time before you acquire one of your own. But go on. Write every day something, and read only the best authors. Thackeray, of course, is one of the best. Kingsley also I would recommend. Scott, also, of course.

You should also read George Meredith, who is a great artist, though he lacks tenderness."

As one of Mr. Besant's rules rightly implies, real, living men and women are the one abiding and exhaustless source of interest. The day of the old-fashioned fable or fairy tale is past. Grown-up people of this day take but little interest in genies or griffins or goblins. They tire quickly even of Jules Verne and Rider Haggard. What the great majority of English-speaking readers want is a portrayal of human life. Some of us want our humanity idealized a little before its photograph is taken; others want the pictures realistic—dirty work-clothes, low-lived thoughts, and all. That is a matter of taste. Just now the realists seem to be in the ascendency, but this is no proof that they will always remain there. The chief fact for us, as writers, to note is the fact that from the myriad relations of human life, and from these almost alone, we must draw our materials. A description of an arctic glacier or a tropical forest may be never so vivid, but if it has no human life near it it is uninteresting, desolate, dead.

The novel, then, consists of choice portions of the great human world-circus translated into words, much as a painter might translate them into colors. A great novel

can not be written in monotonous prose, like an essay; a photograph can not be great, but a painting can. So a novel is plain prose translated into conversation, description, historical statement, philosophic comment, dramatic situations—all the colors into which the writer can dip his pen. I believe that the novel is the prose of real life translated, just as poetry is, only into a different language. And a great deal of this knack of translation can be acquired, if the pupil has a good imagination and sufficient love for the literary art to make him persevere. Try it some time on a plain newspaper paragraph such as you see every day. Take this for instance:

"John Simpson and Michael Flannigan, two railroad laborers, quarreled yesterday morning, and Flannigan killed Simpson with a coupling pin. The murderer is in jail. He says Simpson provoked him and dared him to strike."

There you have it in plain prose. Now take your imagination for a lexicon and begin to translate. Perhaps the new version will read like this:

" 'Taint none o' yer business how often I go to see the girl."

"Ef Oi ketch yez around my Nora's house agin Oi'll break a hole in yer shneakin' head, d'ye moind thot!"

"You braggin' Irish coward, you haint got sand enough in you to come down off'n that car and say that to my face."

It was John Simpson, a yard switchman, who spoke the taunt to a section hand. A moment more and Michael Flannigan stood on the ground beside him. There was a murderous fire in the Irishman's eyes, and in his hand he held a heavy coupling pin.

"Tut! tut! Mike: throw away the iron and play fair. You kin wallup him!" cried the rest of the gang.

"He's a coward; he dassn't hit me," came the wasp-like taunt of the switchman. "Let him alone, fellers; his girl's give him the shake, and—"

Those were the last words John Simpson ever spoke. The murderous coupling pin had descended like a scimetar and crushed his skull.

An awed silence fell upon the little group as they raised the fallen man and saw that he was dead.

"Ye'll be hangin' fur this, Mikey, me bye," whispered one of his horrified companions as the police dragged off the unresisting murderer.

"Oi don't care," came the sullen reply, with a dry sob that belied it. Then, with a look of unutterable hatred and a nod toward the white, upturned face of his enemy, he added under his breath, "He'll niver git her now."

My translation may be rather free, but it will serve to illustrate the point. Such writing may be fiction, every word of it, and yet be as true as anything ever written, if it represents human nature aright.

The fiction writer must be on the watch for dramatic situations and must study to create them; they are almost as necessary to him as they are to the play-writer. The dramatic presentation of a story is often its strongest feature. A novel is like a play; it may be

separated into acts, scenes, situations, dialogues and climaxes, with chapter headings instead of drop curtains to mark the main divisions.

This is a rushing age, and people want novels with movement in them. Business-like brevity and artistic beauty—to unite these two qualities is the difficult task set before the novelist. It is hard to lay down any rules for so independent a creature as the fiction writer, but this I believe will hold at the present day: Strictly avoid all matter that does not advance the story. The historical essays that Victor Hugo sandwiched between the chapters of his thrilling "Les Miserables" are no longer popular. Indeed, the whole spirit of the age seems to be one of growing aversion for anything that might be suspected of being hard reading.

In choosing your field of work as a writer never forget that the greatest interest you can arouse is the human interest. A descriptive article can never command the attention of a narrative. A village paper will find more readers for the story of a fight in the local corner-grocery than for the most eloquent description of sunrise in the Alps that was ever penned. Human nature is essentially gregarious and is always intensely curious to see or hear what the other fellow is doing or saying. You can notice it on the

crowded street; how quickly a crowd gathers if a man or woman falls to the pavement, or if a pick-pocket is caught and hauled away in the patrol wagon! And how swiftly the rumor flies on the tongues of the gossips if a scandal is whispered against a neighbor, or if Jones is in danger of financial failure!

Here is a fact that the writer should realize from the first. A Herbert Spencer will have his readers, but they will be few compared with the throngs that daily devour the prize-fight page of the newspaper; an Audubon or a Coues will have his disciples, but they will be a handful compared with the jostling multitudes that flock to the variety theaters to see enacted the joys or sorrows or wickedness of human life; the sermons of a Phillips Brooks will find their readers, but the number thereof will be infinitesimal compared with the readers of Zola's novels. It is not the frivolity or wickedness of man's heart so much as it is the all-pervasiveness of human interest and curiosity that give the novel, good or bad, its present enormous power. It will be well, therefore, for every writer to take this element into account from the start and come in touch with this great force—human interest in the fellow individual—as often as possible.

Keep familiar with good writing—especially of the kind you are aiming at. Don't

imitate it if you don't want to be called a plagiarist, but do study and analyze it. When you strike a passage that moves you, stop and find out the secret of its power. Read Carlyle and see how an Oxford-graduated polar bear might write with the blunt end of a crowbar. Read Ruskin and learn what it is to be earnest, satirical, poetic, quaint, and yet altogether elegant.

An old rule often quoted by our literature professor at college was: "Compose with fury, correct with phlegm." In other words, write as swiftly as your thoughts will carry you; then go over the manuscript again and correct it with cool, deliberate judgment. If the first draft appears too informal and conversational, put a little more starch into it; if your sentences appear too much coiffé, go back and rumple up their hair.

Beginners, who always tend to revel in the editorial "we," will be disappointed to learn that this is no longer good form and is avoided as much as possible, by all the best newspapers, even in editorials. It was a stilted solecism that will be just as well buried. Many papers make it a strict rule to avoid both "I" and "we," and to use some other form of expression. This is likely to force the writer into overworking the word "it" and into importing that uncomfortable Gallicism, "one," where he means "I." One ex-

treme is as bad as the other, but as it is the style at present to avoid the first person in unsigned articles it is best for the beginner to conform himself thereto.

If you are writing over your own signature and want to refer to yourself, say "I," and not "the scribe," or "your humble servant," or any of the rest of that breed of mock-modest circumlocutions. If you are writing the usual anonymous newspaper article, avoid the first person entirely—except, of course, in interviews—and if it becomes necessary to refer to yourself say "the reporter," or the "*Daily News* representative." It is a fact worthy of note that the New York *Herald* allows its reporters to use the "I" even in its ordinary anonymous news columns. There is no doubt that this sensible practice will some day be universal.

Use the Saxon rather than the Latin derivatives, as a rule, and choose the shortest word that means what you want to say; but don't be afraid to throw in a long word if that treatment is more impressive or funnier or obviates an unpleasant repetition. And when a circumlocution will do what a plain statement will not—namely, draw attention to an old theme--use it. Dress your doll for the season; and when its garments are soiled change them. Put it into boys' clothes if people are tired of seeing it in petticoats;

and make it into a crying baby when as a grown-up lady in a trained ball-gown it has ceased to draw.

I can not tell you what to put into a story to make it sought of the multitude; but I can tell you where to get the material that will do it. Study the people in real life about you; jot down striking bits of conversation overheard in the cars, sketches of odd situations or queer characters, bright answers made by children in the school room, and novel ideas that will come at times unbidden into your own thoughts. Treasure them in a notebook kept for the purpose; they are so many nuggets which, when the time comes, you may be able to melt down into one big golden brick that will catch the eye of the world. Such materials, fused together in the furnace of inspiration by a strong mind that is imbued with an all-pervading love for art or humanity, or both, can not fail to win the hearts of readers, for they are the best and truest materials to be found in the world.

A certain oracle informs us that we must "use forcible and appropriate terms and utter them with conviction." That is like my mother's advice, "Now, don't be shy; adopt an easy and pleasing manner, especially toward ladies." Or it is like telling a beginner on the piano to play "crisply, evenly and correctly, and bring out a faultless tone." In

other words, be perfect instantly, and success is yours. So far as I have been able to observe, these "forcible, appropriate terms, uttered with conviction," that we are advised to use, represent for most of us the dazzling apex of our fondest hopes. It will do no harm, however, to keep our eyes always turned in that direction.

The novel of today is a series of pictures rather than a narrative. As far as possible the pictures and characters should tell the story, and not the author. Neither do the characters go about with placards on their breasts: "I am the hero," "I am the villain." The reader as a rule does not wish to know the author's opinion of the characters in so much cold type. This is what Walter Besant means when he refers to the sin of writing about a character. We are tired, too, of those story people who are introduced to us bit by bit, with the brains carefully dissected and labeled for identification. The analytical novel that devotes a chapter to telling just what principle of moral affinity made Angelina love Edwin more than Archibald is not the novel that will wear out its plates with printing extra editions.

We like novels in which we get acquainted with the characters just as we do with persons in real life. If the dashing cavalier has a heart as black as his moustache, the reader

does not care to be informed of the fact on the first page; he prefers to discover it when the scoundrel assassinates his rival. We do not want talk about the characters; what we want is the talk of the characters themselves. Men and women thus depicted, if drawn by a skilled hand that can make their words and acts seem natural, have an intense reality; the reader feels that they must exist, even though they be of an unfamiliar type.

The true characters are presented to us as people are introduced in the drawing-room and in the street. From their friends and enemies we learn something of their excellences and failings; and we perceive what they do and say; that is all. We can puzzle our brains to discover their thoughts and motives, just as we can in the case of the people we meet every day. We make their acquaintance by degrees, and love or despise them at the end, according to their works.

Three things the writer must never forget: He must feel what he writes, he must know what he writes, and he must be what he writes. The stream cannot rise higher than the source. The author cannot depict a character with nobler qualities than he himself feels stirring within him at the moment when he writes. He cannot make his readers laugh or weep, aspire or love, pity or hate, unless he has felt the same emotions himself.

"What!" cries some incredulous and horrified critic; "must I be a villain before I can depict a villain?"

Certainly; you must be your villain, so far as thinking his evil thoughts is concerned; you must have the possibility of all his wickedness in your heart. You can never draw a more villainous villain than you yourself could be if you turned the whole strength of your character into that channel of action.

Did you ever think of the fact that you can look with pleasure on a picture a hundred times after all that can be told you *about* that picture has grown stale and wearisome? That gives us a clue to the reason why the work of the reporter and of the novelist will never go out of fashion. Their task is drawing pictures of life, the most interesting of all pictures, and readers will never tire of them, no matter how often repeated, if only they be drawn with truth and artistic ability. It is an art worthy a life's work to learn aright.

Fiction reigns supreme in literature today. To be a great novelist, therefore, means to be a great literary artist, honored throughout the civilized world. I would rather be able to depict such a magnificent figure as Jean Valjean, or such a clear-cut, living character as Becky Sharp, than be able to paint a Sistine Madonna. It would mean more in this age of the world.

MISSION OF THE PRESS.

In conclusion, let us take a brief glimpse of the press from the point of view of the idealist. From the prosaic work of dissection let us turn to the more inspiring view of the press as a whole. We have seen what the newspaper is; now let us dream a moment of what we would have it be.

The scepter that rules mankind — who holds it? For ages brute strength gripped it in its teeth. But the strong, white arm of religion wrested it away. Kings came. All nations bowed under a more-than-Russian despotism. Illiterate centuries rolled over the earth like fogs. But from those clouds behold a great, shining hand thrust forth. See how it snatches away the scepter from mitred pope and crowned czar. There are giants in these days — giants greater than Hercules or Goliath of Gath. Strongest among the strong are two modern Titans— Confined Steam and Free Thought. Steam power is mighty. Brain power alone is mightier. Yoke the two together and you move the world. Yoke the two together and you have the steam press.

In yonder metropolis by the sea, under tonight's darkness, a very miracle will be worked. Quick brains, nimble fingers, the electric spark, powerful machinery—all will combine to write the history of today—a volume in a night! Each letter will be beautifully engraved in metal and copied a hundred thousand times before the sun shall have regilded the mastheads in the harbor.

Wonderful the press is and ever will be. Mightier it is than a whole race of giants. But good—is it good? Daily papers and weekly magazines, dime novels and dollar books—put all its parts together, and can the press be called a benefactor?

Think of the columns of unwholesome gossip it pours forth every hour. Think how full it is of crude, undigested thoughts—words "without form and void." Think of these volumes written in a single night or day; are they not mushrooms? Do they not lack the strong fiber that builds history? Think how glibly the printing press tells abroad all evil—how it instructs the young and vicious in crime and murder—how it teaches base thoughts to grow into base deeds. Think of the red-backed, red-minded books that lure, siren-like, from the cheap shop window. Is not such literature a muck-heap, where licentious men may sow licentious thoughts—seeds whose toadstool growth is black with the poison that kills souls?

And the daily press—does it not invade the privacy of the home and drag forth into the sneering gaze of the world the tenderest secrets of the sin-sick or the broken heart? Think on these things and say if you dare that the steam press is not indeed an iron press. Think, too, how it has overturned governments, mocked at the earnest things of life, shaken men's faith in God and man. Think how it acquaints the soul with a thousand new griefs—a thousand new temptations. Think how it pours into the delicate vial of each single human heart the sorrow and sin and agony of the world. Think, and say whether we may not impeach our boasted lightning press in the name of human welfare and happiness—whether we may not pass upon it sentence of condemnation, and call its name anathema maranatha!

But, hold! History tells us our remote ancestors were a horde of robbers, whose highest ambition was to find a Rome to sack. What has raised our aims? What voices have been calling through the centuries, "Look up! Look up!" Our forefathers were vassals and serfs, bound as chattels to the land. Why are we not slaves? Who snatched the stolen power from kings? Who tore away the clouds that hid the star of liberty—dear, loving eye—that looks down upon us from the free blue? Why is there

a glad laugh in our hearts as we tell each other, of a Christmas holiday, that God is good? It was not always so. Peer into the frightening gloom of the Dark Ages. See human thought lying motionless—a corpse. That heavy pall over it is ignorance. What angel lifted that pall and breathed a soul into that clay? What has killed the blight of superstition, that cursed, even where the sweet dew of Christianity had blessed? Whence this great light that sends the ghoul, witchcraft, slinking to its cave, and dazzles the night birds of religious persecution so that they dare not flap their pestilential wings or croak? Why has the weed, intolerance, wilted, and the flower, love, budded and almost bloomed? What echoed the swelling hiss of Christendom against slavery, until it died for very shame?

What, if not the press?

These and a thousand more blessings it has cherished and fondled and battled for and suffered for, that it might lay them all at our feet. Invent the printing press, and democracy is inevitable. Kings may burn books and scatter the ashes to the winds; they are only sowing a myriad seeds to bring forth myriadfold. The tyrant may stamp upon the fire of freedom kindled beneath his iron heel; the press but blows the sparks into his face to burn the deeper. Mind moves rocks and

seas; but the press sways the world of thought itself. Gutenberg has found the fulcrum that Archimedes sought, and strong minds are moving the world up into a clearer light.

Each bit of rag paper, with its ink-spots, is a rift in the leaden cloud of ignorance through which man may look up into the heavenly world of all-knowledge. New rifts, one by one, the earnest writers of the world are making in those clouds. Little by little the press is letting through the mystic rays of thought. Before these rays the exhalations of primeval ignorance that once shrouded the very mountain-tops of humanity are vanishing like sun-chased mists, and even the dark valleys and gloomy gorges of the human world are awaking and singing in the warmth of that glorious dawn.

The new—we all love it. The hope for some new thing is the pillar of fire leading us through the wilderness of time. The newspaper—the paper full of new things—should be manna for our mental hunger. But shall the press tell everything men say or do? God forbid! Too much in man's heart is desperately wicked. Shall it, then, ignore crime and degradation? Ah, no. The newspaper that ceased to tell of human faults and evil would be a sealed page—a closed book. The secular paper has a sacred mission; but it

must deliver its message in the people's own tongue. Its pictures must be lifelike, or they will hang with their faces to the wall. A likeness without shadow is no likeness. The press is a mirror, in which humanity sees its own image, and the blemishes reflected there will not out by breaking the glass. Make *men* perfect tonight, and the newspaper will be perfect tomorrow. But, no cloistered, Inquisition-gagged, Utopian press for the people of today! They'll none of it. The way to raise men's eyes from evil is not to close one's own, but to throw upon vice the glare of its own horrid light—not to paint only virtue, but to paint in its beauty all that there is. Like Wordsworth's ideal woman, the press should be

> "—not too high nor good
> For human nature's daily food,
> And yet a spirit still, and bright
> With something of an angel light."

But shame upon those false pens that make the worse appear the better reason! Shame upon those false artists that throw the high lights upon the darkest deeds, and use virtue only for a background! Out upon those soulless sheets that sneer at honor and purity—that treat crime as a peepshow and blasphemy as a joke! Is there no everlasting truth? Is there no fierce death-grapple between might and right? No red flag of an-

archy to furl forever? Who, if not the press, shall beat back Ignorance, with her bats and owls? Who break the racks and gibbets of unjust power? Who give the lie to those who see the world bloodshot through passion's eyes, or jaundiced through the yellow goggles of greed gorged sick on fellow beings' souls?

Here are the mission fields of the press, and here, despite its faults, it is at work. Each year it carries some of the precious Christian brother-love to earth's uttermost tribes; each day its ministering leaves a few less folds where the "hungry sheep look up and are not fed." Its warning words are teaching men not to waste their lives and burn out their souls with alcoholic flame. The true-hearted element of the press is purifying the atmosphere all through the body politic, and is calling for clear heads and clean hands in high places. It is teaching justice and mercy and temperance. The sound of its coming is sweet in men's ears, for the burdens it bears are glad tidings, and the gifts it scatters are life and light.

Railroad and telegraph have made the printed page a mighty Ear of Dionysius—a whispering gallery where may be heard all the noise and music of the world. But the press has more to do than passively to echo the clanking of wheels and spindles or the

voices of politicians and parties. It can be more than an echo. It can also be a voice. The humblest sheet can and not seldom does speak words that make unjust governments tremble. The country paper has in many a gallant fight sounded bugle notes of courage and led the van to unselfish war. Judge not the whole by the sordid few, though the few be great and powerful. The press, take it all in all, thrusts its own keen blade through the heart of false philosophy, and, crashing through the barred doors of prejudice and ignorance, calls slumbering truth to arms, while all around thought strikes on thought like steel on steel.

The press has messages, too, that must out, whether men will hear or not. What true American pulse that does not thrill at the name of Lovejoy, who dared, fifty years ago, to print the words "negro" and "liberty" on the same page? He knew the mission of the press, and told it forth with voice that only the dastard bullets of a mob could silence. Lovejoy they could kill, but the truth they could not kill. The rifles whose fetid tyrant-breath stifled the press in Alton shot their fire, unawares, across the continent, and relighted the dear old torch of freedom—the torch that Wendell Phillips caught up that very day in Faneuil Hall and laid not down until a thousand more had been kin-

dled—no, not until the stain upon our country's scutcheon was burnt and purged away.

O mighty press—hand that can run the gamut of the soul—shall the world have empty noise or seraph music? O strong Jove of the nineteenth century, shall thy lightning scorch the precious grain, or shall it blast the rank tares? There is work to do. Shall vice and greed stalk over the land, devouring souls, and none to say them nay? Ah! the responsibilities of the pen have become greater than those of the throttle-valve on the flying train or the helm on the swift ship. The engineer or the sea-pilot holds in his hands hundreds of lives. But the writer holds the life-welfare of a hundred train-loads—a mighty fleet—of doubting, groping, aspiring souls. Even when he is in his grave his words are speeding on. He can carry onward to success or hurry downward to ruin. Hundred-fold greater his responsibility, hundred-fold heavier the curse that will light on his head if he is driving his trust on to wreck. God grant that the helmsmen holding this fearful power on the ship of thought may turn its bow full and fair toward the great light—the beacon of eternal truth—in whatsoever compass-point this may shine.

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